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# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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VOL. XXXI. JANUARY, 1926.

No. 1.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

*10th January, 1921.*

A— recounted the following story as told him by Swami Turiyananda :

"Lala Babu once presented a hundred rupee note to his Guru. The Guru owned little wealth. Being suddenly master of one hundred rupees, he scarcely slept at night thinking of what he should do with the money. The next morning found him going to Lala Babu in great vexation of spirit to return him the note. He bowed before his disciple and said : 'My son, a single hundred rupee note kept me awake all last night, whereas you, owning millions, sleep soundly night after night.—You indeed are my Guru !' "

*11th January.*

The Swami said :

"Last evening I had a rise of fever. My attendants had at first concealed this from me, and quoted my

temperature as 99·2°. When the truth was out, they excused themselves by saying that they had mistaken 100·2° for 99·2°. 'Where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise.' But ignorance is never beneficial. Knowledge is the only real thing. And as Gaudapada says, when Knowledge comes, all duality vanishes. It is this dual consciousness which is at the root of all evils. With the destruction of duality, all fear departs. 'The sense of duality is the father of all fear'. 'Verily, O Janaka, hast thou attained to fearlessness!'

'It is no use reading the scriptures unless you practise them. — The Books have been there from times immemorial! During our itineracy in the Kangra valley, myself and Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda)—I was then about twenty-six years old—were met by a Sadhu aged about forty-two years, very sincere and unsophisticated. He said: 'I have been studying Vedanta for the last sixteen years. But even now the sight of a woman relaxes my self-control, just as the thought of tamarind makes the mouth water!' He was quite right. What is there in a book?

'Chandasoka, highly enraged with a man, pursued him with sword in hand. The man sought refuge in a monastery, and the Abbot, though fully conscious of the risk, granted him asylum. When Asoka came and enquired about the man, the Abbot admitted that he was there,—he could not tell a lie. 'Surrender him to me,' said the Emperor. 'No, Sire,' came the bold reply. This made him so furious that Asoka at once lifted his sword to strike him. To the great wonder of the Emperor, the monk stood his ground unflinching without the faintest cry of fear or movement of muscle. The Emperor asked him: 'How is it that you do not quake before death?' 'Why should I? Whose death do you mean?' And thus they discussed, and at last Chandasoka became Dharmasoka. For verily the Emperor had keen intelligence, and he understood.

'The Vedanta as prevalent in some parts of the Punjab is of a loose sort. 'Thou art Brahman', they say,

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and go on doing all sorts of things as if these did not affect them. Discrimination, according to them, is not a sign of Knowledge. Even the womankind hold this view. And sometimes vile things are done in the name of the Vedanta."

The Swami then narrated how Lakshmi Narayan, an inhabitant of Marwar, offered a large sum to Sri Ramakrishna for his maintenance, and how when he refused to accept it, he wanted to vest it in some of his relations. The Swami said: "But Sri Ramakrishna would not agree. He admitted that he still discriminated between things good and evil. You know the story of a Sadhu who came to live in the Panchavati at Dakshineswar. Stories went about against his character, and reached at last the ears of Sri Ramakrishna. And when he remonstrated with him, the Sadhu said: 'If the world is unreal, are my slips of character alone real?' Sri Ramakrishna replied: 'I spit upon such knowledge as thine!' Falsehood should never be allowed to flourish.

"The common man takes to those activities which tend to perpetuate the bond of attachment. And this is true of the whole world. The only exceptions are the Sadhus, who have found the evanescence of the world and renounced it. With the full growth of this discrimination dawns Knowledge.

"Yesterday a preacher came to see me. He declared that his Guru had promulgated a new creed unknown to any one else. I said: 'If that be so, how is it that your Guru alone knows it?' But in fact it was only an aggregate of old ideas. I was assured that it has a lac of adherents.

"No creed is futile in this world. Its very existence proves its necessity. Perchance, where others have failed, this may turn out useful."

*12th January.*

The Swami began by remarking on the extreme difficulty of self-control:

"How very very difficult to hold the mind for ever

above the world! It *will* come down! Very hard indeed it is to escape the grip of desires. As Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Even he who has none of his own will rear up a cat and create homely attachments!'

"Realisation!—Ah, how wonderful it is! The mere thought of the Lord fills one with joy,—who will measure the bliss of seeing Him face to face?"

He quoted from *Viveka Chudamani* :

'In the ocean of Brahman filled with the nectar of Absolute Bliss, what is to be shunned and what accepted, what is other (than oneself) and what different? I do not see or hear or know anything in this. I exist as the Self, the Eternal Bliss—distinct from everything else.'

Referring to K—— he remarked : "His face has now assumed an aspect of courage, which was lacking before. His fare has become scant,—this is a sign of meditation."

*13th January.*

Next day he again referred to K—— and said : "K—— was aggrieved at his having no spiritual realisation or strong yearning for seeing Him. I said to him, 'Having once for all surrendered everything to Him, why do you complain that He did not give you certain things? When He would so will, He would fill your heart with such a deep yearning that you will know no rest. In the meantime go on doing your own work.' He confided to me that sometimes he feels the Divine Presence intimately. That is the effect of meditation. I have offered to bear all his expenses."

## ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE NEW YEAR.

By the grace of Providence, the Prabuddha Bharata has completed thirty years of its checkered life and is just stepping on the threshold of the new year with fresh hopes and aspirations. This is indeed a moment of great significance in the life of the journal, and it should be consecrated by the observance of a ceremony that

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we have the privilege of performing every year at this time. This consists in offering our salutation to God and sending forth our good-will to all His creatures. May all created beings who move on this earth and other spheres abide in peace! May humanity proceed towards Truth and enjoy Bliss Supreme by promoting love and amity towards one another! Further, we take this opportunity of greeting our readers and constituents with love and good wishes and thanking them for the hearty co-operation that we have received from them. May they continue their sympathy and help with the same spirit of patience and indulgence is our earnest prayer!

In the beginning of the new year, as we take a retrospective view of our work, a peculiar sense of joy steals over our soul and stirs us to our depths. This joy is a pure feeling of satisfaction due to the fact that in spite of trials and difficulties the Prabuddha Bharata has been able to give a good account of itself by continuing its career of service. It is to the credit of the paper that in these days when people care more for sensations than serious things, it could enlist the sympathy of at least a section of the English-educated public. But again it cannot be denied that our joy is not an unmixed one. For, if we scrutinise, we find that it is associated with a consciousness of heavy responsibility. The task that lies on our shoulders is, really speaking, not a light one. It implies that we must have all the equipments needed for it. But in spite of our failings and shortcomings when we take into account the sympathetic attitude of our readers and constituents, we feel confident about our future. Besides, there is the advantage that we live in a place, far away from the din and bustle of city life and surrounded by the sublime beauties of nature—a place most suited to our work, and this is really a great thing. The Himalayas, with range after range of cloud-belted snowy peaks, in which we are, are a constant source of our inspiration. Their mystic grandeur and immensity and the ineffable charm of their colour varying from moment to moment in the sunshine, combined with the



sacred traditions of centuries associated with them, fill our soul with a rare wealth of imagination. Above all, the blessings and good wishes of our leader Swami Vivekananda, which are our invaluable heritage, are a living power to us. When we think within ourselves the aims and objects of the Prabuddha Bharata that was founded by him, we seem to hear his magnificent voice ringing in our ears, kindling our faith and hope.

Every country has a mission of its own, and it directs its energies to the working out of this mission. It lives and dies for this mission. India also has a God-appointed mission—a unique mission, of her own. Of all countries, she has been destined since the days of antiquity to move in a different channel and apply herself to the discovery of truths of the realm of the Spirit. So we find that spirituality is the central theme of Indian life, the cornerstone of the Indian national superstructure, the motive-power of Indian aspiration. When spirituality is in its height, India is in the full glory of her power and progress; when spirituality is on the wane, there is a marked decadence in all the walks of her life. Hence it is not without a meaning that Indian science, art, literature, polity and philosophy have acquired a spiritual tinge and are transcendental in their tone. It has been given to India to preserve and accumulate in a dynamo, as it were, the spiritual energy of the human race; and whenever the times have been favourable and circumstances have necessitated it, she has liberated this energy and utilised it for the redemption of the world.

The time has again come when the spirituality of India must influence the nations and races of the world and bring about a universal federation that has been the dream of poets and idealists. The inward, synthetic vision of the Indian seers, their discovery of the solidarity and divinity of the human personality and their conception of the unity and harmony of all faiths and creeds are the greatest desiderata of this age. By the spirituality of India we do not mean Hinduism, or Buddhism, Christianity, Islam or any other denomination but the

fundamental spiritual principles that apply universally and can unify and harmonise all religions of all times and climes. The future religion of the world will be a universal, synthetic religion—the impersonal religion of the Upanishads and the Gita, and it will spiritualise civilisation and change the individual and collective outlook upon life. It will bring rest and peace among the existing warring sects and creeds. The Prabuddha Bharata was started from the Himalayas to represent this universal spiritual message of India. In its simple and unostentatious way, it has been voicing forth this message and trying to reach it to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour and nationality these thirty years. How far it has been successful in its work is known only to God who is at the back of all things. To work we have the right but not to the fruits thereof. But it must be admitted that no sublimer role a journal was ever called upon to perform!

When we speak of the spiritual greatness of India, it must not be understood that we are blind to the excellences of other countries, specially of the West. The West has, no doubt, contributed substantially to the totality of human progress in its own way. The Western civilisation, however defective it may be, has in it features that have also promoted human welfare. The science of the West—its wonderful inventions of steam engine, telegraph, radio, aeroplane and so forth, as also the most advanced methods of organisation, sanitation and education that are found in the West have done not a little towards the comfort and well-being of society. "To understand all is to pardon all," remarked a French lady of repute. But we who profess to love humanity proceed a step further and surveying life in a wider perspective say: "To understand all is to appreciate all." The world-federation that we aim at is possible only on such a principle of mutual appreciation. The East and the West, the two great halves of the world, are complementary to each other. Even as it is impossible to separate the two sides of the same shield, the

East and the West cannot be divided. Both should recognise the merits of each other and never try to live a self-sufficient isolated life, which is not only unnatural but positively harmful. Of course, people are not wanting who in their ignorance consider their unity as something impracticable, and they quote Kipling and say: "O, east is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." But whoever has gone through the whole of Kipling's famous poem know that this is simply misrepresenting him. For, does he not say further on?—

'But there is neither east nor west,

Border, breed nor birth.

When two strong men stand face to face,

though they come from the ends of the earth."

Yes, strength is the bond of unity. The East shall become one with the West on the basis of strength which implies the recognition of each other's strong points. It has been the aim of the Prabuddha Bharata to present to its readers what is best of the East and the West and try to bring them together on a common platform where they may safely meet.

The *Cahiers du Mois*, a monthly publication from Paris, instead of the usual bunch of poems, novels and essays generally supplied by periodicals, has brought out in one of its numbers a series of interesting answers to questions put by its editors. The questions styled as 'Calls from the East' have been addressed to some hundred members of the French intelligentsia as well as a few foreigners, mostly Orientalists, philosophers, authors, artists, critics, travellers and explorers. Of course, the calls are not actual calls from the East offering sympathy and inspiration. The questionnaire, and their answers—all from the West—are a clear indication of the fact that an increasing circle of Western idealists have begun to think of the East in an attitude of respect. They have come to look upon the East, specially India, as a sacred land devoted to the deeper problems of life and welcome earnestly the idea of an immediate collaboration of the two hemispheres. For, they are

learning by experience that the East, so long considered as a benighted land full of magic, charlatanism, superstition, squalor, ignorance, idleness and dirt, can alone rescue the West from the imminent ruin that is threatening it.

The sum and substance of the questions is as follows: (1) Are the East and the West completely impervious, and is it a fact that there are, as Maeterlinck says, in the human brain an Occidental and an Oriental lobe? (2) If the West is penetrable by Oriental influence, who are the interpreters? (3) Is the influence of the East a menace to French thinking and arts, or is it to be followed by a positive enrichment of the Western culture? (4) What is the special field—art, literature or philosophy, in which this influence will bear fruit? (5) What are the merits and demerits of the Western civilisation? The questions are very significant no doubt, and the answers given are also equally significant. We wish we could quote the answers, one or two at least, in extenso. But as space does not permit, we should content ourselves by quoting some passages which struck us as remarkable. Writes one: "The trust we have put in the machine is turning against us . . . . The inner man yields to the outer man: the outer man himself delegates all his powers to an inert system of wheels and motors. A peculiar madness, born of the abuse of money and the abuse of needs, increases this moral disorder which will fatally drag Europe into the abyss. We might have thought that the war of 1914, whose real cause lay in this increasing greed, would teach us a lesson . . . . We see now, after the great experiment of the nineteenth century, that man can hardly live without the Divine." Here we find the weak points of the Western civilisation in a nutshell; and the remedy of the disease, as we have suggested so often in our paper, is its spiritualisation. The West must change its materialistic outlook upon life and reconstruct its social structure on a spiritual plan.

Before we conclude we consider it our duty to warn our countrymen to guard themselves against pitfalls that

lie in their path. The civilisation of the West has a peculiar charm of its own. Its outward appearance is so attractive that there is a danger that many of us, specially those who are unwary, may easily fall into its trap. Not that the Western civilisation is altogether bad in itself, but as it is foreign to our soil, it is bound to be harmful if imported here. After the military conquest of India what was more menacing was the danger of an imminent cultural conquest. The children of the Vedic sages in a moment of weakness showed a tendency to barter their own culture for the tinsel glories of the Western civilisation. It is a matter of not a little regret. But fortunately the tides have changed, and our countrymen have come to know their initial mistake and are rallying round the old standard of life. Now those who have eyes will notice that a positive reaction has set in against the blind worship, the avid imitation and the gulping of everything Western because it is Western. And this reaction has specially been articulated by the great European war to end all war, that has revealed the West naked of pretences. Let India be true to herself and accept what is best of the West after due discrimination. Let her not forget her mission, the special part she is to play in the coming federation of the nations.

"Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break the  
Peaceful rest, even of the roadside dust  
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,  
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever  
Forward! Speak thy stirring words."

## MYSTICISM—TRUE AND FALSE.

By PRINCIPAL KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

Mysticism is a *fact* of the highest significance to man. It is a very happy sign of the times that the mystic experience is receiving considerable attention from some of the best minds of the West. There are several reasons for

this. Science and higher criticism combined have undermined the faith of many not only in the historicity of a great part of the Gospel narrative but in the historicity of Christ himself. There is a clear need of super-history or a reality that is timeless, for man cannot live by bread alone. The reign of intellect, triumphs of science and material prosperity resulted in positivism, naturalism and agnosticism against which idealistic reaction has been gathering strength for some time. And as mysticism rises above history and is the fulfilment of this idealistic reaction, it is but natural that a vast literature should be growing on the subject, and the eager attention of all interested in the true welfare of humanity should be directed to enquiries concerning the depths and heights of the mystic experience.

The term mysticism is perhaps unhappy. To many people it suggests something vague, misty, mysterious and uncanny. It makes many people's flesh creep. The so-called occultism and spiritualism, hidden rites, magic, the witches' Sabbath and such like devilries are associated with the name. It conjures up a whole host of nebulous Mahatmas dwelling in the desert of Gobi or on the inaccessible heights of Tibet. All this is false mysticism or *mysticismus*. True mysticism is not spookism. Spooks may or may not exist, they may or may not communicate with men, but a true mystic has nothing to do with them. He understands the spirit-world in another sense. The immortality he seeks is of another kind. Death to him is the life of the sense. Immortality to him is the life of the soul. It is this immortality that Maitreyi seeks in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

There is nothing vague in the mystic's experience. On the contrary he is very definite. Mysticism is *the* religion. The mystic takes his stand on facts. He sees, he hears, and above all he speaks of the 'flight of the alone to the alone'. He is absolutely pure—free from the least taint of lust and greed (Kâm and Kâncan), and he loves all, for he is all.

The mystic then is a positivist but in a different

sense. His facts to him are the only realities, and above all there is the Reality of realities. The scientist's facts and the worldly man's facts are to him nothing. To him they are an illusion. Here is a great challenge he throws out to the man of science and the man of the world. He has another world of values. It will not do to say that the mystic's experience is a hallucination. For he is very sane, and wisdom flows from his lips if he cares to speak at all, and his influence changes the lives of men for good.

All the prophets and Avatars were mystics, but all mystics are not prophets and Avatars. It is the founders of great religions who are called prophets and Avatars. They were charged with a mission, and their force was tremendous. Each of them was a dynamo of power and shook the world to its foundation. Those who are mystics and nothing more do not possess this power. Many of them work for the good of others, but some are recluses and quietists. Quietism is not a vice as some people say. The real vice is restless activity. The great superstition of the age is faith in work irrespective of its aim.

The experiences of the mystics may be various, but there is a unity underlying the diversity. Vision (Darshan), audition (Sravan or Adesha) and deep communion characterise the *higher* mystics. The *highest* mystic while passing through dualism and pluralism rises above them and realises the Absolute or in other words has Advaitanubhuti.

In the highest mysticism there must be a deliberate renunciation of the world. 'Purgation' is the first step. The true mystic must have a severe conception of life, or in other words he must be purified, disciplined and self-controlled. He must die to the things of the world to which we cling before he can be born anew. The most important thing is that the *will* must be trained and desire quelled. This is the first requisite. All else follows.

Mysticism has been rightly called '*heart-religion*'

because of the mystic's *immediacy* of perception of spiritual truths, because he has *apprehension of truths beyond the understanding* and because *intense feeling blends with the strength of his will*. Where will is weak and emotion therefore undisciplined, there mysticism is false. A mystic without character is no mystic at all however much he may sing and dance and write poetry.

There is a close relation between sex-life and religion. If there is one truth in the literature of psycho-analysis, it is this that *religion arises from a sublimation of the sex-instinct* or in other words *it is sexual energy that is converted into spiritual energy*. This is the great law of the conservation of energy in spiritual life and this is the secret of *Brahmacharya* on which the Hindu lays so much stress. Where this cardinal truth is forgotten erotic symbolism in a certain class of mystics fast degenerates into sensuality, though the language of eroticism in Christian mysticism and in the mysticism of the Vaishnavas is not bad in itself. That the word mysticism is sometimes used in contempt is due to the aberrations of eroticism against which we must stand on our guard. The best mystic path is *Yogic* of which the first step is *Samyama* (self-restraint). The *Sadhaka* or follower of this path is calm and serene. Emotional mysticism is sometimes hysteric. Such mysticism is generally false. We must judge a tree by its fruit. Neurotics may be a pathological study, but they cannot be taken seriously by the student of religion. Decadents are decadents by whatever name they may be called. True mysticism is super-conscious, but super-consciousness is not hysteria. True mysticism is sublime. Its highest state is *Samadhi* of the *Nirvikalpa* kind which is untranslatable into English. It must be clearly distinguished from cataleptic fits and morbid trances which neither improve a man's character nor make him a whit wiser. Sree Chaitanya's case is different altogether, for his sex-life he had totally subdued. Where a man's sex-life is active and yet he falls into swoons in the midst



of Sankirtans (group hymn-chanting parties) it is a clear case of neurasthenia.

In Samadhi a man's eyes and lips are closed, and it is to this fact that the term mysticism owes its origin. For the word is derived from the Greek root *mucin* which means 'to close eyes and lips'—and as the word 'mystery' also comes from the same root, the idea of secrecy or something mysterious has come to be associated with mysticism.

There is a sense in which mysticism is mysterious, for the mystic experience is not the experience of the man of the world who has little introspection, whose gaze is fixed outward and who never closes his eyes except in sleep. The Hindus have got the corresponding word *Sadhana-rahasya*, and the Upanishads teach the mysterious 'secret' meant for the high Adhikaris or those who have specially fitted themselves by strenuous self-discipline. The 'secret' is received in a line of apostolic succession (*Guruparampara*). *Atma-jnana* or self-knowledge (*sophia*, *gnosis*) is the acme of the mystic experience. There is the *Jnana* form of mysticism in which a noetic element is present. But it is not intellectualism, for it does not believe in the sufficiency of man's intellectual powers to realise *Atman*. In the language of the Upanishads, "Who can know the Knower?" There is also the *Bhakti* or devotional form of mysticism which is very easy to understand, and then there is the *Yogic* form of mysticism. The *Jnana* forms and *Yogic* forms generally go together. All these forms ultimately lead to the same result. *Ramakrishna's* life proves it.

'Intuition' is a word that is very loosely used, for we come across the terms 'sense-intuition', 'intuition of the intellect', 'moral intuition' and 'spiritual intuition'. 'Moral intuition' and 'spiritual intuition' again are very vague terms. What *Sankaracharya* calls *Aparokshanubhuti* gives us the best and clearest idea of the highest mystic experience. It is the perfect product of *Raja Yoga*. It is the experience of *Prajna*, a term untranslat-

able into English. The nature of the experience is ineffable. It is '*Abang-manaso-gocharam*' or beyond words and mind. It can be indicated only by '*neti neti*' (not this, not this), the '*nescio nescio*' of St. Bernard. Swami Vivekananda in his solemn Bengali song beginning with '*Nahi surya nahi jyoti*' gives us a glimpse of this experience which was his own. The Ultimate Reality of the highest mystic is Absolute Truth and Absolute Beauty, above all It is Absolute Good (Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram).

Everyone acquainted with such standard works as William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Dean Inge's *Christian Mysticism* and James B. Pratt's *Psychology of Religious Belief* must have formed some idea of what mysticism means. A very intimate acquaintance with the lives of the saints all over the world is necessary for anyone interested in the subject of mystic experience.

It is admitted by all unbiassed scholars of the West that the home of mysticism is India. The Chinese mysticism of Lao-tse and his followers is independent in its origin, but it had no influence outside China. Royce truly says in his *World and the Individual* that "the Upanishads contain already essentially the whole story of the mystic faith." How far Pythagoras, Plato and the Stoics had been influenced by Indian thought cannot be ascertained with accuracy in the present state of our knowledge. But there is a strong element of mysticism in their systems of philosophy, and there are scholars who would trace the theory of numbers of Pythagoras to Sankhya and the immaterialism (doctrine of ideas) of Plato and the Logos of the Stoics to the Vedantic thought. One thing, however, is certain. It is this that the Pythagoreans and the Stoics were a class of rigid ascetics the like of whom we do not find anywhere in the Hellenic traditions. We all know that Aristotle had heard of the Indian Gymnosophists, and he had asked Alexander to bring an Indian philosopher with him after his Indian campaign. If I remember

aright, in McCrindle's Ancient India there is mention of the tomb of a Brahmin wise man at Athens. Who the Essenes of Syria and the Therapeutæ of Egypt were is a vast field of speculation. They were very closely allied. I am inclined to think that they were Buddhist monks. The word Therapeutæ is almost identical with Thera-vadi, and Essene may be the same as Asina (seated in meditation). The relation between Asoka the Great and Antiochus and Ptolemy is very well known. That the Essenes were foreigners in Syria is a very reasonable proposition, for we do not read of monasticism anywhere in Jewish history. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were both Sannyasins, and it is an historical fact that both of them came under the influence of the Essene Order of monks. As far as I know, Jewish history did not produce any Sannyasin at all. To the best of my knowledge the Jewish prophets were married men, and some of them were polygamous. The appearance of Jesus Christ the Sannyasin in Jewish history is a new and startling phenomenon. Be that as it may, when we come to the Neo-Pythagoreans and Neo-Platonists of Alexandria we are on indisputable grounds. Alexandria was the meeting-ground of the East and the West. The wisdom of Asia was in high repute here. "Philostratus expresses the highest veneration for the learning of the Indians; Appolonius of Tyana went to India to consult the Brahmins; Plotinus himself accompanied the Roman army to Persia in the hope of gathering wisdom while his comrades searched for booty; and the Christian Clement has heard of Buddha." I may add to this that not only has the Christian Clement heard of Buddha, but Buddha is actually worshipped both in the Eastern and Western Churches as the Christian saint Josaphat! That the mysticism of the saints of the Roman Catholic Church is traceable to Plotinus through the mystical theology of Dionysius the Areopagite is known to all. Roman Catholicism is infinitely richer in spiritual life than Protestantism. The chief Protestant mystic was perhaps Boehme of Germany. Bunyan, George Fox and Wesley

are good Protestant mystics. The types, of course, are different. That Protestant mystics drew much of their inspiration from the Catholic saints is an historical fact. Swedenborg has been styled a mystic by Emerson, but perhaps it would be more appropriate to call him a spiritualist. There is much mystic thought in Emerson. The American Thoreau, to my mind, is a truer mystic than Emerson. Both Emerson and Thoreau were profoundly influenced by the Upanishads and the Geeta. Thoreau never married, owned no property, was a strict vegetarian, teetotaler and non-smoker. Carlyle's writings are full of mystic thought, and to many Carlyle appeals much more strongly than Emerson. That is not merely a question of temperament, for in Emerson the false philosophy of optimism is too much in evidence. Carlyle is much stronger, more vital and dynamic than Emerson. As for Tolstoy, he did not like the term 'mystic'. But a truer mystic it is hard to come across in modern Europe, for he was a Sadhaka (religious mystic) in the strict sense of the term. In Ruskin's writings also there is much mystic thought. In fact, all that is best in man has its source in mysticism. It "makes rich the blood of the world."

*(To be continued.)*

## MAHATMA GANDHI ON THE GITA.

BY PANDIT SURESHWAR SASTRI.

"So I preach only the Upanishads. If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads. And of the Upanishads, it is only that one idea *strength*. The quintessence of Vedas and Vedanta and all lies in that one word. Buddha's teaching was Non-resistance or Non-injury. But I think this is a better way of teaching the same thing. For, behind that Non-injury lay a dreadful weakness. It is weakness that con-

ceives the idea of resistance. I do not think of punishing or escaping from a drop of sea-spray. It is nothing to me. Yet to the mosquito it would be serious. Now I would make all injury like that. Strength and fearlessness. My own ideal is that giant of a saint whom they killed in the Mutiny, and who broke his silence, when stabbed to the heart, to say—'And thou also art He!' "

—Swami Vivekananda.

In reply to the question whether the Gita teaches *Himsa* (Violence) or *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), Mahatma Gandhi, writing in 'Young India' under date Nov. 12, 1925, observes that "to one who reads the spirit of the Gita, it teaches the secret of Non-violence," though "actual physical battle is not out of the question. To those who are innocent of Non-violence, the Gita does not teach a lesson of despair. He who fears, who saves his skin, who yields to his passions, must fight the physical battle whether he will or no ; but that is not his *Dharma*." "Better far than cowardice is killing and being killed in battle." To Mahatma Gandhi, the only *Dharma* that the Gita teaches is Non-violence. If man conducts himself otherwise, he has no justification for himself in the Gita, it is simply the working of his own violent and impure nature. That is why (so says Mahatmaji) the Lord, knowing the violent nature of Arjuna, asked him to fight, because "thou canst not all at once argue thyself into Non-violence,—finish what thou hast already begun." Sri Krishna, according to Mahatma Gandhi, does not furnish any better defence of Arjuna's fighting than his own lower nature.

The Gita is the very essence of the Hindu scriptures "All the Upanishads are the cows, the son of the cowherd is the milker, Partha is the calf, men of purified intellect are the drinkers, and supreme nectar Gita is the milk." An interpretation of the Gita therefore requires a careful scrutiny. It is best to declare at the outset that though we agree with the general tenor of Mahatmaji's reply, we fear, in certain respects, he has read unwarranted

meaning into the book, and in others, unnecessarily confused his explanation by using ambiguous terms.

It is well-known that Mahatmaji uses the word Non-violence in a very comprehensive sense. Thus, in course of his reply, he observes that "*Ahimsa* means *Moksha*, and *Moksha* is the realisation of Truth." But if that is so, why not directly say that the Gita teaches *Moksha*, instead of substituting it by a term which has all along signified quite a different set of ideas? Of course, every one has the liberty to find his own name for everything. But we are afraid, in the present instance, it is not a mere question of words. *Moksha* denotes a state of the soul, which is beyond both good and evil, beyond all 'pairs of opposites', and is certainly not identical with *Ahimsa*; it transcends *Himsa* and *Ahimsa* as well. A knower of Truth perceives that "he who takes the Self to be the slayer, he who takes It to be the slain, neither of them knows. It does not slay nor is It slain." The highest state of consciousness is not therefore what is ordinarily meant as *Ahimsa*. "Self-realisation and its means is the theme of the Gita." How then can we say, knowing as we do, that the Self is beyond both *Himsa* and *Ahimsa*, that "that the central teaching of the Gita is not *Himsa* but *Ahimsa* is amply demonstrated by the subject begun in the second chapter and summarised in the concluding 18th chapter"? As a matter of fact, however, the tone of the whole of the second chapter is quite different from and sometimes even opposite to what is known as *Ahimsa*. The thirty-eighth verse says, "Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, the same, gird thee for the battle ; *thus thou shalt not incur sin.*" And what have we in the eighteenth chapter? Here is the seventeenth verse: "He who is free from the notion of egoism, whose intelligence is not affected (by good or evil), *though he kill these people, he kills not, nor is bound (by action).*"

The psychology behind the use of Non-violence for *Moksha* is probably that though Mahatmaji may agree with us regarding the Ideal of the Gita, he insists on the

way to that Ideal to be absolutely *non-violent*. But, if our inference is true, such insistence will cut at the very root of the teachings of the Gita. The beauty of the Gita lies in its taking every man by the hand in whatever station of life he may be, and showing him the way to the Highest. Whatever might be his occupation or position, if he only discharges his duties in a detached and dispassionate manner, and dedicates the fruits of his actions to the Lord, he will assuredly attain to the Supreme Goal of life. The change that the Gita insists on is a change of the heart, not an external change. In fact, it would rather have every man hold on to his hereditary profession and duties than relinquish them in favour of better avocations. And the Gita certainly does not expect the whole world to ply non-violent trades. So that when Mahatmaji asserts that the only *Dharma* the Gita teaches is Non-violence, he manifestly draws a wrong conclusion. He would have it that wherever violence has been advised, the Gita has only submitted to the inevitable, asking every man to follow the dictates of his own nature. And it is in this light that he understands the Lord's advice to Arjuna. Is the Gita then a guide for only the non-violent few? Has it no message for the majority of mankind? Does it not prescribe any *Dharma* for them? No, the Gita certainly is not meant for the privileged few. It is for all and has a message for each and every man. True, most men are impelled to work by their own nature. But there is a way by which even such natural actions may be made to assume the fragrant sanctity of a sacrament. That is called *Yoga* which is *karmasu kausalam*, 'skill in action'. And the Gita discloses that secret to mankind. Mahatmaji takes no notice of this central and unique doctrine of the Gita. No doubt he says in one place that "the Gita strives to carry us to the state beyond *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, a state that excludes anger, hatred etc.," but he has not thought fit to ascertain the means by which the Gita expects us to reach that blessed consummation. Had he done so, he would have found a deeper meaning in the 'Lord's Song' and would not

have written of Arjuna as he has done : "But I can even now picture to my mind Arjuna's eyes red with anger every time he drew the bow to the end of his ear." He cannot conceive that the drawing of the bow can be done with calm and dispassionate eyes.

But perhaps when Mahatmaji says that the only *Dharma* according to the Gita is Non-violence, he only means that every action to be conducive to our spiritual well-being, must be done in a non-violent *spirit*, the *form* being either violent or non-violent as the circumstances may determine. Had we been correct in our surmise, we would have perfectly agreed with him in his explanation of the Gita, understanding Non-violence, of course, in the sense of *Anasakti*, non-attachment. Unfortunately, however, Mahatmaji does not leave us in doubt about his intention : he wants the *form* also to be non-violent. But such a position, as we have seen before, is unwarranted by the words of the Gita. So many and so positive are the contrary utterances that they cannot be disposed of in the manner of a certain verse of Tulsidasa's *Ramayana*, in which the poet "brackets drums, Shudras, fools and women together as fit to be beaten." Such a canon of interpretation, though recommended by Mahatmaji, is directly opposed to the honoured traditions of the entire Hindu community and the experiences of thousands of devotees and saints. You must take the words of the Gita seriously, as they are, without explaining them away as interpolations, or representations of some ancient barbarism or even as a mere set-off to some other important theme, and draw your conclusions therefrom.

Here, then, is the fundamental difference between the Gita and Mahatmaji. Whereas Mahatmaji holds that with the change of the mind, a man's vocation also should change towards greater and greater non-violence in form, the Gita says that in spite of change within, his actions need not change. For actions in themselves have no significance. It is the spirit behind that endows them with value and meaning, and even an apparently vile action, done in the right spirit, can become a channel for



the highest Spiritual Communion. The Gita enjoins further that under all circumstances, it is better for one to hold to one's original position in life, for that tends to conserve energy and prevent its waste, too many changes being sure to result in social chaos. We have mentioned how Mahatmaji characterises Arjuna's fighting as *Adharma*, but what have we in the Gita? The Lord calls the battle as *Dharmyam Sangramam*, a righteous warfare, a war supported by *Dharma* (II. 33). And again and again he asks Arjuna to fight with his mind lifted beyond the 'pairs of opposites', pleasure and pain, gain and loss. The Lord says: "Renouncing all actions to Me, with mind centred on the Self, getting rid of hope and selfishness, fight—free from (mental) fever" (III. 30). In the face of such clear utterances, how can we say that Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna was unauthorised by *Dharma*? If what Mahatmaji says of the "red eyes" of Arjuna be true, he must have been a very bad disciple indeed. And the Lord had not asked him to achieve the impossible, nor did he promulgate a false philosophy of work to hoodwink and lure him into bloody warfare.

What example does Sri Krishna himself set by his life and work? He is called 'Non-violent' by Mahatmaji. But if we are to believe all that is recorded of him in the books, he must have been non-violent in a peculiar sense indeed. Did he not himself wage warfare? Was he not party to many transactions which were anything but non-violent? But how significant is the last phase of the Great One's life,—his children destroying themselves in the fury of drunken quarrels, himself unmoved and indifferent,—a bare witness of the internecine feud!

Again, what of the great Bhishma? Who can ever doubt the great spirituality of the sage 'grandfather'? He was the very embodiment of the ideal of the *Sthita-prajna*, 'the man of steady wisdom'. And yet who could withstand the prowess of that mighty warrior in a battle-field? And nowhere in the Mahabharata is he described to have lost himself in the lust of warfare. What of Yudhishthira again, the son of Dharma himself, of whose devotion and

purity every page of the great epic bears testimony? Are these all imaginary tales? If not, then do they not illustrate the truth that even outward *Himsa* is possible without anger, without attachment, without hatred? What shall we say of Sri Rama, the Ideal of Man? Is it impossible to think of him as having fought his battles with a calm, dispassionate mind, without his inner Divine consciousness being the least undimmed by his external actions? How beautiful is the anecdote of Kausika and the hunter, as narrated in the Mahabharata! He, a mere butcher, plying a bloody trade, was the repository of the highest wisdom and the greatest philosophy! His violent profession did not clash with his saintliness. We read of the Guru Govinda Singh's hard years of Tapasya and vision of the Divine Mother before he came out of the mountain fastnesses to fight the enemies of his faith, and the Guru certainly was a great saint.

Therefore the Gita does not teach *Ahimsa*, even as it certainly does not teach *Himsa*. These are only matters of details. It is the motive of actions with which the Gita primarily concerns itself. It teaches us to go beyond both *Himsa* and *Ahimsa*, beyond all such pairs of opposites and realise our unity and identity with *Brahman*. And to that end, it imparts to us a secret that we may, by its help, so fulfil our duties that instead of binding us, they will hasten our progress towards Freedom. That is called *Karma Yoga*. It enjoins us to change the spirit of our work, not the work itself.

Mahatmaji truly says that "a prayerful study and experience are essential for a correct interpretation of the scriptures." "A man who would interpret the scriptures must have the spiritual discipline." To all these must be added an unbiassed mind. It is one thing to read one's own meaning into the sacred books, quite another thing to correctly interpret them. Therefore an unbiassed and fresh mind is essential. It is not true to say that "ultimately one is guided not by the intellect but by the heart, that the heart accepts a conclusion for which the intellect subsequently finds the reasoning." There is

such a thing as dispassionate study, or all philosophy is a fool's errand.

The view of the spiritual life, which Mahatmaji represents in his teachings, is only one aspect of Hinduism. Hinduism stands for the Universal Religion, for the totality of spiritual experience. And the Gita is its true and perfect representation. This is the age when Religion should be conceived and lived in its essentials. For only on the basis of the essentials can all sects and creeds unite. Therefore the Ideal to be pursued above all is that of the Truth which is beyond both good and evil, and of which these are different aspects. This is the Ideal, so truly represented in Mother Kali,—Her right hand raised in blessing, the left holding the sword—which should be held before the country. Only in the name of such an Ideal will the sons of India find it possible to sound many experiences to their depths, experiences which they must face before they can realise their destiny. Only in the name of such an Ideal, the Worship of the Terrible, will they find the requisite vigour and courage in their limbs and heart to fight the battle of their Fate.

“Scattering plagues and sorrows,  
Dancing mad with joy,  
Come, Mother, come!  
For Terror is Thy name,  
Death is in Thy breath.  
And every shaking step,  
Destroys a world for e'er.  
Thou 'Time' the All-Destroyer!  
Come, O Mother, come!  
Who dares misery love,  
Dance in destruction's dance,  
And hug the form of death,—  
To him the Mother comes.”\*

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\* From 'Kali the Mother' by Swami Vivekananda.

## JESUS THE CHRIST.\*

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA.

Even as the stars in the vast firmament follow their fixed course without haste or delay, even so God's laws and purposes move according to appointed times.

Looking back over the world history we observe that the human race as a whole as well as in parts on its march towards progress meets with a checkered career. After reaching a certain state of excellence there comes a period of decline, of exhaustion, as it were. Then, higher ideals are forgotten, and man begins to walk in the path of error. Sin and unrighteousness begin to prevail till roused by the threat of utter ruin and dissolution man awakens, and stemming the downward course swings back society into the opposite direction.

This awakening of the desire for higher and nobler conditions invariably is heralded by the appearance of a mighty personality, a superman of extraordinary spiritual insight, the personification of these nobler intentions. Such men tower so high above the best of ordinary humanity that they are regarded as special messengers from Above. These are the Avataras, the Sons of God, Divine Incarnations, the Living Images of God. They reveal to us God's love and wisdom, and through the spoken word make His thoughts audible to the human race.

But the majesty of these Incarnations is veiled from the eye of the vulgar, world-loving man. It is revealed only to those who see through the eye of the spirit. And so whenever God incarnates on earth a few selected souls come with Him to proclaim to their fellow-men the advent of His birth. These are His direct disciples and co-workers. It is through them that we can understand somewhat of the greatness of their Master. And through

\* Freely quoted from "The Desire of Ages," by Mrs. E. G. White.

them the records and interpretation of their Master's life are handed down to posterity.

It is through the study of these records that love and devotion is aroused in us, and the desire to live our lives as the Master wishes us to live them. We have not seen these God-men with our eyes, but it is the testimony of all saints that we can know them through the spirit.

The study of these records then is of the greatest benefit to humanity. During Christmas time let us study the records relating to the life of Jesus the Christ. These records are called the Gospels. They are narratives of the life and teachings of Jesus written by his disciples. To these Gospels we have to turn for whatever information we can gather about the life of Him who is called the Son of God.

From these Gospels we learn that some nineteen hundred years ago, in human reckoning, in the counsel of Heaven once again the hour had been determined for God's incarnation on earth. And the angels of light rejoiced, for God in the form of man would walk among men, a Savior of the world.

From the bosom of Infinite Love a ray of light flashed forth. And reaching this earth it embedded itself in the womb of a virgin. And when her time was full the virgin brought forth a son. And his name was Jesus.

For more than ten centuries the Hebrew race had awaited the coming of this child. In story and in song, in temple rite and prayer, they had enshrined his name. Upon his coming was founded their brightest hope. Yet when he came they knew him not. When at last among all the nations of the earth the Jewish people were chosen to receive the Son of God, even as it had been prophesied, they accepted him not, for their hopes were built on worldly greatness.

A conquered and oppressed race the Jews looked forward to the prophesied Messiah as their deliverer from the Roman yoke. They hoped by his coming to regain their national independence and world dominion. But

Jesus came not to conquer hostile armies. His mission was the redemption of souls.

The religion of the Jews when Jesus came had degenerated into formal ceremonials consisting of an endless round of minute and burdensome injunctions. Though the spiritual meaning was lost and only the outer form remained, the Jews measured their holiness by the multitude of these rites, while their hearts were filled with pride and hypocrisy.

The priesthood had become corrupt. The Rabbis tried to uphold their reputation by the observance of ever-increasing rites and ceremonies. They had great power which they used for selfish ends. The people had to meet their merciless demands. So there was great discontent among the people. Greed, violence, distrust and spiritual apathy were sapping the strength of the nation.

Though they had fallen so low, still the Jews were filled with national and spiritual pride. Through their religion they had built up a wall of separation between themselves and other nations. People not belonging to their race or of a different persuasion were despised and shunned as untouchables. These were called Gentiles or Heathens.

The Jews then were a proud but most unhappy race. They fervently hoped for the coming of one who would remove their suffering, who would be their king and a conqueror of their foes. Their hope was based on passages in their scriptures promising the birth of such a deliverer, one who was to be ruler of Israel upon whose shoulder would rest the government, the Prince of Peace.

It is not altogether strange that when Jesus, the carpenter's son, poor and unlettered, declared himself to be that deliverer, their king, the Jews regarded him as an impostor. And when Jesus attacked their leaders calling them vipers and hypocrites and denounced their forms of worship, they considered him a dangerous character to be driven from their midst.

It is the orthodox belief that Jesus was meek, humble.

lowly in spirit and mild. But despite phrases to that effect in the New Testament, there was another side to his nature. There does not seem to have been anything meek about his scourging of the money-changers out of the Temple, which he called 'a den of thieves,' nor about his terrific abuse against the Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus' method of reform was not always mild and persuasive. He was often violent in his denunciations of what the Jews held sacred. He called them a wicked generation. He came to fulfil a higher law, but he broke the law of the Jews. He violated their traditions. He disregarded the authority of the Rabbis. He was not a king. He did not lift a finger to free the race from their subjection to the Romans.

That such a reformer should arouse antagonism and hatred among a violent, passionate people was inevitable. And when Jesus claimed to be equal with God, persecution was but a natural result.

But all this does not detract from Jesus' greatness. There was good reason for his righteous indignation. Jesus was true to himself, he lived his own teaching. He had a message to deliver, and he delivered it fearlessly not counting the consequences. He spread the Light that was in him. He was straightforward, entirely given to God. He was a Prince among men, a Light shining in the darkness of his age. But he was not what the Jews expected of their prophesied Messiah.

Jesus' childhood and youth were spent in the little mountain village of Nazareth. There, it is written, "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." In the sun-light of the countenance of his Heavenly Father, Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

His mind was active and penetrating, with a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond his years. And his character was beautiful in its symmetry. As a child Jesus manifested a peculiar loveliness of disposition. He was always

ready to serve others with unselfish courtesy. He was an obedient, truthful boy.

With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of his powers. With delight she sought to encourage that bright, receptive mind. She taught him songs and prayers and lessons from the scriptures.

The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His father and mother were his teachers. He learned to read and write, and he diligently studied the Jewish scriptures, and like other boys of his village, he learned and worked at his father's trade. The parents were poor, and home-life was very simple.

When Jesus was twelve years old his parents took him to Jerusalem to attend the annual feast of the Passover. It was a great event in Jesus' young life. The village boy would go on his first long journey to the greatest city in Palestine. There, in the magnificent Temple with hundreds of other boys of his own age, he would witness the impressive rites of the paschal service. After this visit he would be called a son of the law. From childhood he would enter into youth. Special opportunities would be given him for religious instruction, and henceforth he would be expected to participate in the sacred feasts and observances.

While at Jerusalem Jesus had the remarkable inspiration that he was not an ordinary boy, that he had taken birth to manifest the will of his Heavenly Father. In a flash of illumination he understood his relation to God to be that of a son to his father. In an outburst of joy he revealed this discovery to his startled parents.

Then, when the feast was over the pilgrims returned to their homes. Jesus was a changed boy. He became more serious and thoughtful. He shrank from contact with the multitude. He returned from Jerusalem in quietness with those who had learned from him the secret of his life.

When he returned to Nazareth Jesus had to resume the daily tasks of a carpenter's son. He assisted his father in his trade and performed such duties as his



age and circumstances required of him. And during his leisure hours the scriptures of the Old Testament were his constant study. In a gentle, submissive way he tried to please those with whom he came in contact. 423 40

*(To be continued.)*

## MY IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.\*

BY DR. BHUPENDRA NATH DUTT, M.A., PH.D.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF A FOREIGNER.

I went to America sixteen years ago, as a political refugee, and when passing from Europe to America I took an English boat and came to New York. In front of the harbour of New York there is a statue of Liberty pointing towards America as the land of freedom and liberty. I had high hopes then that I was entering a land of freedom. But six years later I had a different idea when I left that country. The first thing which impressed me in America was that the country was grand, the land of gigantic bridges, extensive railways, big sky-scrappers, sub-ways etc. I found out what condition we are in and felt that we must try to raise ourselves and be their equal. Everything in America is big and grand. As soon as a foreigner lands in America the first thing Americans ask is: "What do you think of our country, and what do you think of our women?" If your answer is disparaging, then you are nowhere. Surely the land is the richest country in the world. This is the impression that one gets. Of course, an European gets a better impression. It is to him a land of liberty with plenty of chances, but to the Oriental it is not a heaven. Anyway when a man lives longer in the country he finds out the social conditions and environments. He finds the key-note of America is dignity of labour.

\* Notes of a lecture delivered in Calcutta.

Further, there is in America all the chances which one can get in this life. A European immigrant's son can become the President of the United States. Naturally the European says America is a land of liberty and freedom.

In Europe there is no such thing as dignity of labour. For, there is an aristocracy of class and caste in Europe. In Asia we have nothing. We do not respect labour. America is a projection of Europe, and Europe is a continuation of Asia. Europe is half Asia, and America is the antipodes of Asia. Hence the conditions of life are absolutely dissimilar. Therefore to an Indian it makes a great difference to be in America, but a European is not so much out of elements there. An Indian or an Oriental, if he is not strong-minded enough, falls under this shock of Americanism. The American destroys everything that is non-American. He is an iconoclast. He judges everything with the American standard. Under this onslaught the Indian goes down. Certainly I also had the same experience. There is an attack on the Oriental manners, customs, religion etc. Everything Oriental is bad, and everything American is good. Very few people will stand that strain.

Then comes the time when the Oriental comes back to his own and develops his race consciousness and becomes proud of himself and his heritage. The race prejudice in America is very terrible. One cannot think of it. If you want to compare, take the case of Travancore and find out the difference between the Brahmin and the Pariah, there. The same is the case in America.

But apart from that, when one mixes in society one finds, in spite of race and colour differences, there is such a thing as democracy. When Americans find an educated and cultured man, they take him in. Though there is a limitation to his movements, still he becomes part and parcel of his friends' society. To a certain extent, America is democratic. To the European emigrants it is the land of democracy. The wandering Jew from Galilee or a persecuted Irishman finds it is a

heaven for him, and some of my countrymen there in America had been writing about American democracy in newspapers. But Americanism is too hot for the Oriental. America is, truly speaking, democratic for the white people and not so for the others.

But what is the definition of democracy? It is a relative term. Political scientist say, "One man one vote" is democracy. But many Americans say there is no liberty in America. A few rich families rule the country. The people who founded the country were the persecuted Puritans and Presbyterians, all refugees from Europe. The constitution says there is freedom for everybody, but there is no freedom to-day. Ten millions of Negroes are economic slaves. The Orientals who have settled in the country find no social freedom. They are persecuted.

Therefore I say that freedom is a relative term. If you go towards the east side—New Port, there is aristocracy. The people there have formed a class of their own. Towards the middle-west where there are Irish emigrants, Germans and Austrians, the people are comparatively more democratic. Go further west to California, the people are still more democratic. There is no convention in the life of the people of the western side.

In the east in educational matters the English conventions are kept in tact. The people there will not allow the girls in the classes of boys, and the curriculum is more antiquated. They insist on learning the classics. But in the middle-west and in the west there is no such difference. The women of those parts are not so prudish. In the eastern side a professor of biology is not allowed to talk many things before girls which in Europe the professor will talk freely. I know a case which led to police intervention. If you go towards the west, you will find a good deal of difference. There the people are of a different temperament. Again the south is different from the north. If you live long in America, you can spot a man with his accent. As there is no intervening

mountain and as there are chains of railways binding the east and the west, there is one homogeneous nationality. Every settler becomes an "Anglo-saxon". They take English traditions, manners and customs, and this is fostered by the propaganda started by Carnegie. As a result, English influence is very great in America to-day. Fifty years ago the Americans were not in sympathy with the English people. I have been in New England where the people are of pure English descent, where I have heard people saying, "Thank God, we have no English blood in our veins." To-day the Americans feel themselves as belonging to the English race. On this account the Indians have a lot of troubles nowadays in America. Recent news is that Indians are not very much liked. This is the general situation regarding the Orientals.

#### EDUCATION.

America being a new country is hankering after education. Compulsory education for men, women and children is universal. Still the educationists say 5% slip out of their fingers, and remain illiterate. As soon as a foreigner lands in America, he is taken charge of by immigration authorities, and there are various organisations which teach them English and the American constitution. But here and there you will find old people who still speak their mother tongues. To-day the tendency amongst the immigrants is to keep up their old traditions. As for example, the Scandinavian immigrants speak Scandinavian at home and English outside. The education mania is so great that even the farmers visit the schools to learn about agriculture, horticulture etc. Illiterate ladies go to lecture halls and learn something. In that way Americans are building up a new nation. Without education none can progress. They apply the latest psychological method of education and spare no pains to educate their children.

Regarding the educational system there is a difference between the east and the west, to a certain extent. The east is more conservative. One has to learn Greek or

Latin as high school curriculum. In the west they are more free. They confer diploma in Latin in the east but in English in the west.

The American educational system is very interesting. It is a compound of English and German methods. The English system of education is college system, and the German method is the university system, and Americans have applied both the systems. In the under-graduate years the English system is pursued, but after getting his baccalaureate diploma and entering the post-graduate department, the student gets into a different system. He has to specialise in a particular subject, and has to show his proficiency in two foreign languages before appearing for M.A., or Ph.D. In many of the eastern universities there is a group system, in which some courses are compulsory, and some are optional. When I was in America I rebelled against this system. But after making a comparison with other countries, I think the American system is the best, because one gets a fair knowledge about the world at first and can specialise in any subject afterwards. To my mind, the American system is more applicable to us than the German system. In university life in America one has to live in the university. It is more of a residential character like that of Oxford and Cambridge. The university is a town in itself ; it has its commons, gymnasiums, dancing halls, sporting clubs and literary unions. It is a colony by itself. I remember Mr. Sherwood Eddy who was born in India saying that after making a tour round the world he found out that the American student life is the most enjoyable life.

But the criticism on the American system is that it is stereotyped, and it is on this account that Upton Sinclair condemns it. One has to go through the mill of education which is ordained by the authorities. There is no option, no scope, for independent or free thinking. One has to learn and imbibe all those things. The university is more or less in the hands of the capitalist class. A radical professor gets no chance in America ; he will be kicked out. One of my professors

was kicked out, because he was too much of a radical. Professor Iblen was kicked out of the university, because he wrote a book describing how the capitalist class got hold of the wealth. There is no choice for a student but to swallow up all the things which a certain professor says in the class. In that respect all the universities of the world are more or less at fault. Everywhere they are under the influence of the leisured class. This is the disadvantage under which American universities are labouring, and at present there is no hope of remedy. We should take a note of these things. The same complaint is made in Germany where all universities are officialised.

### SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 564 Vol. XXX.)

यथार्चिषां स्रोतसां च फलानां वा वनस्पतेः ॥

तथैव सर्वभूतानां वयोऽवस्थादयः कृताः ॥ ४३ ॥

43. As in the case of flames, or streams, or the fruits of a tree, even so are the conditions of age,<sup>1</sup> etc., brought about (by Time).

[<sup>1</sup> *Age &c.*—This change in the body can be easily inferred from its effects, as in the examples given.]

सोऽयं दीपोऽर्चिषां यद्वत्स्रोतसां तदिदं जलम् ॥

सोऽयं पुमानिति नृणां मृषा गीर्धीर्मृषायुषाम् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. As in the case of flames the idea and the statement that this is that very lamp, or in the case of streams, that this is that very water, are false,<sup>1</sup> so also are the idea and statement that this is that very man, with reference to men whose lives are vain.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> *False*—the recognition being merely based on a semblance.

<sup>2</sup> *Vain*—because enveloped in ignorance.]

मा स्वस्य कर्मबीजेन जायते सोप्ययं पुमान् ॥

त्रियते वामरोऽग्नान्त्या यथाग्निर्दारुसंयुतः ॥ ४५ ॥

45. Neither<sup>1</sup> is this man born nor does he die through the instrumentality of his own works. It is all a mistake. He is immortal. The case is analogous to that of fire which is manifested<sup>2</sup> through the wood.

[1 *Neither &c.*—Even in the case of an ignorant man it is the body that dies and not the Self.

2 *Manifested &c.*—Even though surviving indefinitely as subtle fire.]

निषेकगर्भजन्मानि बाल्यकौमारयौवनम् ॥

वयोमध्यं जरा मृत्युरित्यवस्थास्तनोर्नव ॥ ४६ ॥

46. Conception, embryo state, birth, childhood, boyhood, youth, middle age, decay and death—these are the nine states of the body.

एता मनोरथमयीर्ह्यन्यस्योच्चावचास्तनूः ॥

गुणसङ्गादुपादत्ते क्वचित्कश्चिज्जहाति च ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Owing to his attachment to the Gunas, the Jiva assumes these imaginary states, high and low, belonging clearly to something else,<sup>1</sup> and some,<sup>2</sup> under<sup>3</sup> exceptional circumstances, give them up.

[1 *Something else*—viz. the body.

2 *Some*—who are fortunate enough to obtain the grace of God.

3 *Under &c.*—by the practice of discrimination.]

आत्मनः पितृपुत्राभ्यामनुमेयौ भवाप्ययौ ॥

न भवाप्ययवस्तूनामभिज्ञो द्वयलक्षणः ॥ ४८ ॥

48. One's own birth and death may be inferred from those of one's son and father. The Witness<sup>1</sup> of things possessed of birth and death is not affected by either of them.

[1 *Witness*—the Atman. So in the next verse.]

तरोर्बीजविपाकाभ्यां यो विद्वाञ्जन्मसंयमौ ॥

तरोर्विलक्षणो द्रष्टा एषं द्रष्टा तनोः पृथक् ॥ ४९ ॥

49. He who sees the origin and death of a plant from its seed and final transformation—the observer is distinct from the plant. Similarly is the Witness of the body distinct from it.

प्रकृतेरेवमात्मानमविविक्त्याबुधः पुमान् ॥

तत्त्वेन स्पर्शसंमूढः संसारं प्रतिपद्यते ॥ ५० ॥

50. The ignorant man, failing rightly to discriminate thus the Atman from the Prakriti, is deluded by the sense-objects and goes from birth to death.

[The transmigratory existence of the ignorant man is set forth in verses 50—54.]

सत्त्वसङ्गाद्वृषीन्देवान् राजसासुरमानुषान् ॥

तमसा भूततिर्यक्त्वं भ्रामितो याति कर्मभिः ॥ ५१ ॥

51. Swayed by his past works, a man<sup>1</sup> through his attachment to Sattva becomes a sage or a god, under the influence of Rajas an Asura or a man, and under the influence of Tamas a ghost or a beast.

[1 Man &c.—Because Sattva is characterised by purity or balance, Rajas by activity, and Tamas by dullness or inertia.]

नृत्यतो गायतः पश्यन् यथैवानुकरोति तान् ॥

एवं बुद्धिगुणान्पश्यन्ननीहोऽप्यनुकार्यते ॥ ५२ ॥

52. Just as a man watching a band of dancers or singers imitates<sup>1</sup> them, so the Atman, even though without activity, is moved to imitate the attributes of the Buddhi (intellect).

[1 Imitates—spontaneously in his mind.]

यथाम्भसा प्रचलता तरवोऽपि चला इव ॥

चक्षुषा भ्राम्यमाणेन दृश्यते भ्रमतीव भूः ॥ ५३ ॥

53. As<sup>1</sup> trees reflected in moving water seem to be moving also, and as, when the eyes whirl, the land also seems to be whirling.

[1 As &c.—So the movements of the Prakriti are superimposed on the Atman.]



यथा मनोरथधियो विषयानुभवो मृषा ॥

स्वप्नद्रष्टाश्च दाशार्हं तथा संसार आत्मनः ॥ ५४ ॥

54. As imaginations and dream-perceptions are unreal, so also, O Uddhava, is the relative existence of sense-experience of the Atman.

अर्थे ह्यविद्यमानेऽपि संसृतिर्न निवर्तते ॥

ध्यायतो विषयानस्य स्वप्नेऽनर्थागमो यथा ॥ ५५ ॥

55. Even though the sense-world is unreal, the relative existence of a man who dwells on sense-objects is never at an end,—as troubles come in dreams.<sup>1</sup>

[1 *Dreams*—which, as everybody knows, are the effect of the impressions of the waking state.]

तस्मादुद्धव मा भुङ्क्ष्व विषयानसदिन्द्रियैः ॥

आत्माग्रहणनिर्भातं पश्य वैकल्पिकं भ्रमम् ॥ ५६ ॥

56. Therefore, O Uddhava, cease to experience the sense-objects through the outgoing organs. Look upon the delusion of plurality as caused by the non-perception of the Atman.

क्षिप्तोऽवमानितोसद्भिः प्रलब्धोऽसूयितोऽथवा ॥

ताडितः संनिबद्धो वा वृत्त्या वा परिहापितः ॥ ५७ ॥

निष्ठुरतो मूर्खितो वाह्नेर्बहुधैवं प्रकम्पितः ॥

श्रेयस्कामः कृच्छ्रगत आत्मनात्मानमुद्धरेत् ॥ ५८ ॥

57-58. Even though scolded by the wicked, or insulted, ridiculed, calumniated, beaten, bound, robbed of his living, or ~~spat~~ upon, or otherwise abominably treated by the ignorant—being thus variously shaken<sup>1</sup> and placed in dire extremities, the man who desires his well-being should deliver himself by his own effort.<sup>2</sup>

[1 *Shaken*—from his faith in God.

2 *Own effort*—through patience and discrimination.]

उद्धव उवाच ॥

यथैवमनुबुद्धयेयं वद नो वदतां वर ॥

सुदुःसहमिमं मन्य आत्मन्यसदतिक्रमम् ॥ ५९ ॥

विदुषामपि विश्वात्मन्प्रकृतिर्हि वलीयसी ॥

ऋते त्वद्धर्मनिरतान् शान्तांस्ते चरणालयान् ॥ ६० ॥

Uddhava said :

59-60. O Best of Teachers, kindly instruct me about this so that I may understand it. O Self of the Universe, this insult to oneself by the wicked I consider as most difficult to put up with even by the learned, excepting those who practise the religion taught by Thee, are equanimous, and who have taken refuge at Thy feet, for nature<sup>1</sup> is too strong for men.

[<sup>1</sup> Nature—the instinct to retaliate.]

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

ORION.—By Bal Gangadhar Tilak. B.A., LL.B. Published by Messrs. Tilak Bros., Gaikwar Wada, Poona City. Pp. 227. Price Rs. 2.

This is a reprint of a book written by Lokamanya that has already attained celebrity for the original researches it contains. It establishes by various proofs the antiquity of the Vedas and shows that 'the traditions recorded in Rigveda unmistakably point to a period *not later* than 4000 B.C. when the vernal equinox was in Orion.' No pains have been spared to cite Vedic texts and legends in support of this conclusion, and the whole thing has been dealt with in a rational and intelligible fashion.

It may also be added that though the astronomical method has been adopted to arrive at the conclusion, the work has a literary value and is as free from technicalities

as possible. It has been accepted by many that the researches, full of patient study, deep scholarship and vast erudition as they are, throw a flood of light on the age of the Vedas and prove that the oldest period in the Aryan civilisation is identical with the pre-Orion period that may roughly be assigned to 6000—4000 B.C.

THE ARCTIC HOME IN THE VEDAS.—By Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B.A., LL.B. Published by Messrs. Tilak Bros., Gaikwar Wada, Poona City. Pp. 502. Price Rs. 5.

This big volume, also a reprint, proving that the ancestors of the Vedic seers lived somewhere in the Arctic region in inter-glacial times, is a sequel to Orion, the researches into the antiquity of the Vedas. The author has brought in a mass of Vedic and Avestic evidence to prove his theory ; and one feels, as one goes through the book, the force of his arguments.

It has been shown that there are passages in the Rig-veda, the most ancient of the Vedic literature, which, read in the light of modern research, clearly establish the fact that the Vedic deities had Polar attributes and that the Vedas have in them traces of an ancient Arctic calendar. The Avesta has also been brought in in support of this conclusion. "The Avesta expressly tells us," remarks the author, "that the happy land of Airyana Vaejo or the Aryan Paradise was located in a region where the sun shone but once a year, and that it was destroyed by the invasion of snow and ice, which rendered its climate inclement and necessitated a migration southward."

The objection generally put forward that the ancient home of the Aryans cannot be placed in an ice-bound region like the North Pole has been dispensed with by alluding to the recent researches of the geological science which prove among others the fact that the climate of the Poles during the inter-glacial times was mild and suitable to human habitation. How far this theory is true can only be decided by experts who have carefully studied the subject from various points of view.

THE BUDDHIST ANNUAL OF CEYLON (1925).—Edited by S. W. Wijayatilake and S. A. Wijayatilake. Printed and published by W. E. Bastian & Co., Colombo, Ceylon. Pp. 64. Price Rs. 1-50.

This is a journal devoted to the special study of Buddha and his philosophy, appearing annually from Ceylon. It contains various readable and instructive articles, biographical, ethical and philosophical, contributed by many learned people. What have specially interested us are the articles—'Thoughts on the Life of Buddha' and 'Buddhism as the World-religion.' The former brings out the salient features of the life of Buddha and their bearings upon humanity. "As I meditate on the life of the Buddha the qualities which stand out most strikingly to me, aside from his wisdom, are his honesty, strength and compassion," says the writer of the former. This is only too true. The latter shows how Buddhism can claim to be the religion of humanity at large. One feature of the journal is that it has been amply illustrated, and this feature has no doubt added to its attractiveness and beauty.

KRISHNA: THE SAVIOUR (Enlarged Edition).—By T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 188. Price Re. 1-8.

As the author says in the Introductory Essay: "In this volume have been brought together essays and addresses meant for young men for a spiritual synthesis of thought and life." Sri Krishna, the Saviour, delivering a message of harmony in the battle-field of Kurukshetra, the Flute-player, captivating the souls of earnest and sincere people at Brindaban, stands for a concept in which has been blended some of the most beautiful and lofty visions of human idealism. The author exhorts humanity, specially his countrymen, to take up that concept and try to live it. For, he thinks, such a concept, implying as it does a universal, synthetic and all-comprehensive ideal, is the panacea for this sceptic and materialistic age. The

book has been written in fascinating style, at once simple and forceful.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### WHAT JAPAN OWES TO INDIA.

There was a period in the history of India, when almost all the countries of the Asiatic continent directly or indirectly were influenced by Indian civilisation. Travellers from far and near came to India to study her art, literature, philosophy and religion and went back laden with the wealth of her invaluable wisdom. Besides, India would send missionaries all over Asia to spread the message of love and good-will. In this way the ethico-religious teachings of Lord Buddha got abroad, and wherever they went there are traceable the marks of Indian thought and culture.

It was in the 6th century A. D. that Buddhism reached Japan, at first through Korea and then through China, and influenced that country. Some time afterwards a batch of Indian Buddhists went to Japan and by their personal life and precepts greatly helped the spread of Buddhism there. Some of them, we come to know, would live a silent, rigorous life behind all public notice, and some would come in direct contact with the people, mixing in public affairs.

In an article in the *Young East*, a monthly appearing from Tokyo, Prof. Takakusu shows how Japan was indebted to these Indians. "In fact, while in civilisation in general," writes the Prof., "Japan was most influenced by China, for her spiritual civilisation she owed to Korea, China and India." And he gives a list of Indian teachers who went to Japan, some of whose activities are not as yet widely known. There was one Hodo, which means in Sanskrit Dharma-Bodhi, who went to Japan by way of China and Korea and preached the Buddhist Law. Many

miraculous powers were attributed to him, and he was in possession of a small bronze image of Avalokiteswara which was afterwards installed in a big temple built under imperial command. Due to the preaching of Hodo many Japanese embraced Buddhism, and the whole country is said to have been soon converted.

There was another South Indian Brahmin, Bodhi-Sena by name, who went all the way to China to have an interview with a sage called Manju-Sri and thence to Japan where he is said to have taught Sanskrit to Japanese priests. He also preached the faith of Buddha Amitabha and was a very popular figure in the then religious life of Japan. He was associated with the building of some important temples in Japan, in one of which he passed the last days of his life teaching his disciples. It is said that the Japanese syllabary has been greatly influenced by the Sanskrit teachings of Bodhi-Sena.

The famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, who came to India and stayed here for some time, was not a little responsible for the spread of Buddhism in Japan. For, after his return home many students from far and near would come to be taught by him, and one of them, Dosho by name, a Japanese, preached the different schools of Buddhist philosophy for a long period of time in Japan. Dosho was also the first Japanese to advocate cremation and conduct burial services after the Indian fashion in Japan.

Prof. Takakusu also shows how many things imported to Japan from India 'have exercised a powerful influence on the religious life of the Japanese people,' and how 'practically the whole of the Hindu Pantheon is represented' some how or other in that country. Thus, Siva, the god of destruction in India, is worshipped as Dinkokuten, i.e., Mahakala, a powerful dispenser of fortune; Saraswati, the goddess of learning in India, has become Benzaiten, the diety of fortune in Japan; similarly, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth in India, has been represented as Kichijoten, a goddess of courage.

It is indeed a curious thing that Buddhism as a

harbinger of Indian civilisation and culture was gaining ground abroad but gradually losing all influence in India, the place of its birth. Various reasons have been put forward as an explanation of the phenomenon, the chief among which are, no doubt, internal corruptions and strifes between the different schools into which Buddhism was split up. So much bitter were the feelings at times, specially between the Maha-Yana and the Hina-Yana schools, 'that their followers', as the Prof. writes, 'refused to drink water from the same river.'

#### INDIAN MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

That Indian medicine and surgery, called by the significant name of Ayurveda, which means the science and art of life, were once highly developed must be admitted by all unbiassed students of history. Though a major portion of the vast literature written on the subject has succumbed to the ravages of time, what is extant is enough to show that India can rightly be proud of her Ayurvedic system. It was quite thorough both in theory and practice and did immense service to suffering humanity in the past. Based as it was on the analytic and synthetic method, it was sure and lasting in its efficacy and comprehensive in its scope. And it will not be saying too much if we remark that even in its present decadent condition it can safely hold its own against its foreign rivals in some departments. Only those irresponsible critics who have no definite knowledge on the subject and are prejudiced against everything that is Indian, say that Ayurveda is a system for quacks and is most crude and unscientific.

In the Forward, a Calcutta daily, Mahamahopadhyaya Kaviraj Gananath Sen, M.A., L.M.S., has written an article on Ayurveda containing much information. He has given a beautiful historical survey of the system, tracing its origin, development and decay, as well as bringing out the fundamental principles on which it is grounded. The history of Ayurveda has been divided by

him into four distinct periods: (1) The Vedic or pre-historic period, (2) the period of the sage authors and original researches, (3) the period of Siddhas or chemist-physicians, and (4) the period of decay and compilations. Finally, he has considered briefly the present position of Ayurveda and suggested ways and means for its rehabilitation.

The origin of the Hindu medicine and surgery dates as far back as the Vedas, which contain numerous references to Ayurvedic theories, drugs and methods of treatment. We need not enter here into the legends connected with the genesis and progress of the system, for which we refer our readers to works like Charaka and Sushruta Samhita. As the writer says, Bharadwaja was the founder of the school of physicians, where as Dhanwantari inaugurated the school of surgeons.

Perhaps from the very beginning or during the second period, the Ayurvedic science became divided into eight special departments: (1) Salya or surgery and midwifery. (2) Salkya or surgery of the eye, ear, nose, throat etc., (3) Kaya-Chikitsa or practice of medicine—both preventive and curative, (4) Bhuta-Vidya or treatment of mental diseases, including so-called obsessions, (5) Kumara-Bhritya or hygiene and treatment of children, (6) Agada-Tantra or the symptomatology and treatment of poisons including snake-bites, rabies etc., (7) Rasayana or the science and art of rejuvenation and attainment of longevity, and (8) Vajikarana or sex-hygiene and treatment of sexual diseases. From the records existing at this period, we come to know that numerous works have been written on each of these specialised subjects, and a classified list of over fifty of such treatises has been given by Kaviraj Gananath Sen in his Bengali work, Ayurveda Samhita, Part I.

The period of specialisation, as we have said, was followed by a period of chemist-physicians, and the date of this period may be placed as far back as the early Buddhist period of Indian history. The special feature of the chemist-physicians was that they discovered and used



numerous mineral preparations such as the various compounds of iron, mercury, zinc, tin etc. 'The names of the exponents of this school are legion and are to be found in the vast number of works written by them.' in Sanskrit and Tamil. Tamilians developed a separate school of their own that had the source of its inspiration in the ancient Tamil culture.

Next came the period of decline. For, during this period India witnessed a series of invasions from the Scythians, Greeks and Mahomedans successively, and the circumstances were such as few original works could be written. "Dissection of the human body which had been in vogue from very early times and is still advocated by Sushruta was stopped by an edict of Asoka. Talented authors of Ayurveda like Vagbhata, Samgadharma etc., came in during this period which covered about 600 to 1,600 A.D.". But most of these authors busied themselves in works of compilation, and there was very little original research.

It was during the last two thousand years that Ayurveda rose to the climax of its progress, and the works such as Charaka, Sushruta etc., were translated into other languages and made their way into Egypt and Arabia. Al Beruni, Dr. Wise and other scholars bear testimony to this fact. All the different departments of Ayurveda, including anatomy, physiology, chemistry, botany, materia medica, pharmacy, curative medicine, hygiene and preventive medicine received a great impetus. As it is not within our scope to enter into details, we shall notice here a few striking facts as referred to by Kaviraj Gananath Sen.

The theory of 'Tridosha' on which the whole system of Ayurveda is based was greatly developed. The soundness of this theory is proved by the fact that practitioners obtain a great measure of success when they treat patients in the light of 'Tridosha,' which means the vitiation or derangement of the three elemental functions of the body. Unfortunately many wrongly identify this theory with the humoral theory of the Greeks. Kaviraj

Gananath Sen has given a brief exposition of this theory in his work *Siddhanta Nidana* and shown that it is not inconsistent with modern physiology. Besides, 'in the practice of medicine, proper diagnosis was always insisted upon before treatment. The diagnostic methods were the same as the methods employed in the West half a century ago. All the five senses (except the tongue according to Charaka) were employed for diagnostic purposes.'

It is, perhaps, not known to many that surgery that has achieved such a tremendous success in the West nowadays had its origin here in India. Surgery in almost all its aspects was cultivated and perfected to a degree, and operations, major and minor, were extensively performed. We get elaborate description in ancient works about instruments generally used. "A long list of cutting instruments (Sastras) and non-cutting instruments (Yantras), which were classified according to their shape and purpose occurs in *Sushruta*, *Ashtanga-Hridaya* and other works. A comparative study of this subject with modern surgery forces upon us this conclusion that a large number of the modern surgical instruments were known and used widely by the ancient surgeon of India."

From what has been said it is clear that Ayurveda in medicine and surgery, was far advanced in ancient times. But what is its condition now? There is no denying the fact that it is far behind modern medical science in many respects. For, on account of various causes, specially lack of encouragement, it is standing where it was, whereas the Western medical science is progressing from day to day by leaps and bounds. So what we should do is to cultivate Ayurveda diligently in the light of present scientific researches and add to its treasure all that we can gather from different sources and not simply waste time and energy in vainly idealising the past.

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## SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

Invited by those who are interested in Vedanta, Swami Prabhavananda of the Hindu Temple at San Francisco paid a visit to Portland, Oregon, on the 22nd of September, 1925.

The day following he gave his first lecture in the Library Hall, Public Library, to an appreciative audience. The subject of the lecture was 'First Principles of Spirituality', and it was so impressive that the people immediately sought to know when more lectures would be given. The second lecture was delivered on the 27th of September in the Assembly Hall of the Portland Hotel, the subject being 'Universality of Vedanta, and Realisation and its Methods'. In the evening of the same day the Swami addressed another audience, and the subject was 'The Subconscious Mind and its Control'. On the 28th of September another large audience greeted the Swami in his address upon 'Religion of Love'. Besides, two more lectures were delivered by the Swami on the 29th and the 30th of September, the subjects being 'The Superconscious Vision' and 'Raja Yoga or the Mystic Path' respectively.

So intense had the interest become that after the last of the series of lectures a class was readily formed, something like 120 students attending. The classes, four in number, dealing mainly with Raja Yoga, were held in the Assembly Hall of the Portland Hotel. During these classes requests came in for a resident Swami. So the names of those interested were taken at the end of the class work, and a committee was formed who elected a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Further information says that the Swami after his work at Portland went to Tacoma, Washington, where he captured the hearts of the people by delivering a series of nine lectures. Afterwards on the 6th of November, 1925, the Vedanta Society of Portland was formally opened in the Kraemer Building, Cor. Second and Washington streets, Swami Prakashananda of the Hindu Temple conducting the dedication service.

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI. FEBRUARY, 1926.

No. 2.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

*14th January, 1921.*

Apropos of the Bhâgavata class held yesterday, the Swami said: "What a fine advice Prahlâda gave to his boy companions ! He says 'Worship the Lord even from childhood. This body is extremely despicable ; the only saving grace is that it helps realisation of the Lord.' And how boldly he declared to his father that none had taught him to love God, neither his teachers nor even he himself ! This love of God, he says, is attainable only through the grace of the devotees. The father exclaimed, 'Who is this ? He will be my death, I fear ! Even Brahmâ and Vishnu quake before me, but he argues fearlessly with me ! Kill him !'

"Perhaps you are thinking that it is fictitious. But no, it is all true. Prahlâda is not dead, he still lives.—He lives in every devotee's heart, in yours and in mine. When such stupendous efforts failed to destroy him, how

can he ever die? Did he not realise himself as pervading everything? Read the Vishnu Purana ; there you will find that his monistic consciousness made even blocks of stones float on water !

"An excellent book again is the Chandi! The philosophy of the Chandi has established the unity of Brahman and Shakti. 'She the Divine Mother is the Absolute and yet the Relative in the form of the Universe. She pervades everything.' " Thus the Swami recited verse after verse from the Chandi and remarked at last : "Mahamaya has veiled everyone with delusion that Her play may continue undisturbed. She vouchsafes both worldly enjoyment and spiritual emancipation. Such is the theme of the book. Suratha and Samadhi worshipped the Mother for three years before they realised their desires.

"How is it that we *know*, and yet cannot *act*? This is due to Her Maya. She must be propitiated. 'She being propitiated grants the boon of Freedom.' Aye, without Her grace, no man can get out of the net of Illusion. Only through worship can the common man realise the supreme beatitude, the state of Universal Consciousness. There is no other way.

"Speak to others even as you speak to yourself. That is to say, know every one as your own self. Do you ever get angry with yourself? Even so behave with others. But that would be possible only when you see your own self existing in others. This is the spirit which underlies Swamiji's doctrine of the worship of the Poor Narayana. And it is in this spirit that Gandhi talks to others, and he is obeyed. Indeed, there is a plane of consciousness where everything appears as one's own self. And when one reaches that plane, there is no more any confusion for him."

The conversation then turned on Ishan Ch. Mukherji's wonderful charities. Ishan Babu was a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna ; and Sri Ramakrishna had asked him to renounce those beneficent works and direct his whole mind towards God. The Swami said : "Even in such

charities, there is a subtle selfishness. He doubtless had an eye on fame. That is why he could act as an umpire or leader. Very difficult indeed is unselfish work !"

N— asked : "The work that we do, is it also not unselfish in that way? Some say that we work impelled by our own inclinations."

The Swami : "True, you are guided by your own inclinations ; but done in the right spirit, your work will bear an exactly opposite fruit to what will accrue from selfishness."

"Some are doubtful whether our works are really Sri Ramakrishna's works."

"Then why do they work? The distinction that the works are Swamiji's and not Sri Ramakrishna's, is irrational. Swamiji did not preach even an iota of his own. Bold indeed must be he who would differentiate between Swamiji and Sri Ramakrishna !"

The Swami said that the identical confusion was prevalent formerly even amongst some of his brother-disciples, and he had to argue hard with them to dispel that error.

"Some look upon these works," continued the Swami, "as inferior to meditation. They do not know and talk nonsensically. What is meditation? Why is it so highly looked upon? Because it is the way to the soul's union with God. Now let us see what he who initiated the works meant. Did he ask you to merely clean the patients' soiled cloths, or to worship Narayana in and through them? How then is this worship of Narayana different from meditation? It may be, one cannot serve in this spirit, but one has no right therefore to call it inferior. Swamiji proclaimed this new path after realising the Self as immanent in all things. But they do not understand it, and would fain move in the old grooves of spiritual practice. Three days of such service done in the right way, will eventually bring about spiritual realisation. Such indeed has been the experience of whosoever has tried it. - K— has told me

that in those days when he was working in the hospital, he would always feel highly lifted up in spirits. Is not every man God Himself? 'The Lord abides in every heart.' If one fails to realise this, it is one's own fault, none else's."

*(To be continued.)*

## RELIGION IN INDIAN POLITICS.

There is a subtle law which operates in all planes of life. Stated in general terms, it comes to this: Lower interests fulfil themselves by serving the higher ones; the latter in their turn attain fruition by declining to be exploited for lower profits; always the small for the great, never the great for the small.

This law is found so true in the spiritual life that it is the accepted tradition among spiritual aspirants to avoid using any powers that may come to them in course of their Sadhana. It is said that whoever exploit them for any lower purpose, not only lose them, but bring about their own fall. Nor is this less true in other spheres of life. No power, be it material, intellectual, moral or spiritual, can be utilised for lower gains with impunity. Such abuse makes the power rebound on the wielder himself. The small fulfil themselves by being parts of the great, like the tributaries of a river. The highest is its own end. And to him alone is the Highest, the Pearl of Great Price, vouchsafed, who will not barter it for tinsels.

This is true equally of individuals and nations. No nation can with impunity exploit its higher powers for lesser gains. To do so is to commit a Himalayan blunder; and though it may at first yield success, the end is always disastrous.

We are afraid, the Indian National Congress has been guilty of the identical error in its policy and activities

during the past few years. It sought to exploit religion for political ends. And not a little of the consequent failure and confusion is due to this unnatural and reverse policy.

Up till 1919, i.e. the Amritsar session, the Congress has been a purely political organisation. The special Calcutta session inaugurated the policy of Non-violent Non-co-operation. This gave the Congress, in effect and practice, a religious colouring. It assumed a philosophical tone and preached a certain gospel of life. Non-violence had to be lived. Fasts and *hartals* were instituted for the purpose of self-purification and self-discipline. Soul-force was the sword to be wielded in that battle. Swaraj, though it remained undefined as the political end, was variously interpreted. Some declared that individual and personal Swaraj had been attained by them, though collective Swaraj was not yet. Non-co-operation assumed a religious aspect. The sacred books were consulted to see if co-operation with the Government was not against their holy injunctions. Altogether the movement looked more religious than political. Thus was religion made a hand-maiden of politics.

Let us see the consequences. First, the Khilafat movement: It is seriously to be doubted whether it should have been made a part of the Congress programme on religious grounds. More than one thinker have attributed the growing fanaticism of the Muhammedan community to this unwise step of the Congress. Muhammedan bigotry was dying its natural death. The Khilafat movement ensured it a fresh lease of life. Their co-religionists in other countries have found through bitter experience the folly of mixing religion with politics. But Indian Musalmans do not seem to have learnt that wise lesson. The justification of the Khilafat movement was found not only in the broken pledge of Mr. Lloyd George, but also in certain religious traditions. Human nature is not logical. Once the ardour of our religious nature is evoked, it does not confine itself within the



limits of the original cause, but begins to operate in all possible directions. The Khilafat movement has not been an exception ; and the bitter communal struggles have been the consequence. The splendid show of unity between the Hindus and the Muhammedans with which it began has been converted in the end to bitter mutual hatred and suspicion. This is the danger of invoking the power of religion for secular purposes.

Again, it will be seen that the Hindu society has not been of late immune from internecine quarrels. Much of this social unhappiness is traceable to the Congress policy. We still remember the warning a Hindu monk gave to a non-co-operationist professor against implicating the masses in the political propaganda. His argument was that the so-called apathy of the masses was at once the strength and the weakness of our nation. We the English-educated are cultural hybrids. We have lost the continuity of our national traditions and institutions. We can regain the lost clues only in and through the masses. Very carefully we must approach them that the almost disjointed forms may not break, leaving us in the dark, and we must resuscitate them by the infusion of true and unmixed religion. These traditions and institutions are the result of thousands of years of national experience and effort, and are our most precious inheritance. What did the N. C. O. movement do? It sent its workers to the villages in the name of religion with its cult of soul-force, the one signal which is still able to energise even the dying Indian with zeal and enthusiasm. And the monk said (it was in the triumphant days of the N. C. O. movement) that when the movement would fail as it was bound to fail, it would leave behind a sinister force in the villages, working against the ancient traditions, evoking communal self-consciousness and a sense of having been deprived of rights by the upper classes, and a struggle for their acquisition. Politics seeks to acquire rights, religion to sacrifice them for the good of others. The basic principle of our society is this spiritual law of self-sacrifice.

N. C. O. politics introduced a new and contrary force into society, and as it came in the guise of religion, it was bound to be accepted with greater avidity than when offered in its original form. The words of the monk were prophetic as the present conditions testify.

The N. C. O. movement provides a unique study in political psychology. The tremendous enthusiasm it evoked was unparalleled in recent times. The whole nation, enthused by a noble idealism, swayed as under a mighty storm. But it all ended in despair. The prospects now are decidedly gloomy and the problem inconceivably keen and complex. How to explain this great success and the equally great failure? Similar phenomena were witnessed in Bengal during the Swadeshi movement. The same tremendous enthusiasm fired the whole people, and their spirit seemed to burn with an ethereal glow. Nationalism became a religion. But finally the country sank again into a pathetic torpor. The net political gain was relatively insignificant, and a huge waste of energy was the outstanding debit. We succeeded in wresting small crumbs from the unwilling hands of the powers that be ; but on the other hand we made our internal problems keener and complexer. It will be noticed that the growing complexity of the Hindu-Moslem problem synchronises with the progress of our political movements ; and now it seems well-nigh unsolvable. What is the reason of this ineffectuality and confusion?

The reason, as we have said, is the unnatural combination of religion and politics. We sought to spiritualise politics, partly because it was congenial to the national temperament, and partly because religion in India is the primal source of strength. But the fact is, we are not yet in a position to spiritualise politics. Spiritualisation presupposes that every individual should become conscious of his spiritual nature and make it active in every detail of his life. Only when such individuals engage in politics, does politics become spiritualised. Spiritualisation of politics therefore requires a spiritual reform of

stupendous magnitude as a preliminary condition. But what has actually been done? We have begun in the wrong end. Instead of devoting our best energies to the individual and collective spiritual upliftment, we gave ourselves up to politics and sought the inspiration of religion for its furtherance. We have made religion a means to attain political ends. Therefore though we succeed for a time, in the name of religion, to evoke a great enthusiasm, we end by creating religious and consequently communal dissensions and fail to evoke real and enduring strength, as only true and not pseudo-religion can do. The majority of people cannot yet distinguish true religion from mere conventions, its essentials from non-essentials, or spirituality from credal religion. What actually happens therefore is that our 'spiritual' politics becomes in their hands a source of religious fanaticism and communalism. Therefore politics must be separated from religion.

'What about the spiritualisation of life, you so often advocate?'—it will be asked. 'Is not politics a part of our life?' Of course, we do not mean to exclude politics. But such universal spiritualisation cannot come by making a jumble of everything. The way to it lies through a correct conception and perfect realisation of religion in its pure and unmixed nature. Let us be spiritual first. Everything else will become automatically spiritual. If we have not this much patience and forethought the consequence will be that we shall not only complicate our political life, but also cause the decline and death of religion itself. For example look at the history of Papacy. In an alliance between politics and religion, it is always the latter that takes the subordinate place. The animal and its hunger is stronger in the common man. Religion necessarily succumbs to politics and its materialism. The West is an eloquent testimony. Can we risk that? If spirituality is our national ideal, surely we can ill afford to sacrifice religion even for any considerable political profit!

We are aware that there are some who can, by virtue

of their spiritual eminence, even now take a spiritual view of politics. They are Karma Yogins, they have spiritualised their whole life. The Divine Truth alone is their objective, politics they conceive only as a means to it. But one swallow does not make a summer. The whole nation or the majority at least must become such Karma Yogins before 'spiritual' politics can be actualised and made a mass movement. We cannot manufacture Karma Yogins by the simple passing of a resolution! Therefore we must make spiritual regeneration the foremost item of our national programme. We need not make too much of our political subjection. If the Spirit is mightier than matter, surely then external conditions shall not long hamper the progress of the soul.

But we are afraid the politicians have not bestowed much thought on these questions. They have simply followed the Western pattern. In spite of our glib talk about nationalism, we are not yet sufficiently national. Our national Congress has been mechanically following the Western policy of nationalisation, the policy of making the State the sole and paramount power<sup>1</sup> in the country. The soundness of this policy of centralisation is seriously questioned even in its original home. It is considered that though the control of such material interests as political administration or industry by the State is welcome, fundamentals like education or religion must be outside its power and jurisdiction. The inauguration of the policy of nationalisation in India will be extremely disastrous, being as it is absolutely foreign to the national genius or traditions. The Congress has so far tried to play the roles of the politician, the social reformer, the educationist and the economist, though perhaps not the spiritual teacher. Yet it is difficult to account for its appointment of a committee to go into the Buddha Gaya Temple question. One may reasonably ask for its credentials. Mere numerical strength does not qualify an assembly to become the judge of one and all questions. True, the I. N. Congress is our most representative assembly, and the voice of India finds its clearest utterance

through it. But though the majority may be a reliable guide in material affairs, it is ill qualified to express any opinion on things that require expert knowledge. It may be rightly said, for example, that the educational policy of the Congress was extremely farcical. Decentralisation is therefore the best possible course. To the plea that the Congress may take recourse to the alternative policy of the division of labour, entrusting separate committees of experts with the several functions of the organised nation, our question is: Shall these be permitted absolute freedom of thought and initiative? Will not the central political organisation practically dominate them, its creatures?

There is a gradation in the values of life. Just as the mind is superior to the body and the soul to the mind, so in the scale of values, national or individual, material interests occupy the lowest place, intellectual the higher, and spiritual the highest. Each again has its own laws. Material things are guided by their own principles. Intellect works and flourishes in its own way. So also the life of the spirit. You cannot impose the laws of the one on the other without detriment to each other. Thus you cannot impose the laws of the spirit on matter without stunting the latter's growth. Politics has its own laws. They do not necessarily agree with the laws of religion. Society has its own laws. Any interference by religion or politics with them is sure to impede them in their beneficent operations. Swami Vivekananda said: "The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion, within its proper limits and give freedom of society to grow."

Separation therefore is the wisest course, so that each may control or be controlled according to its legitimate scope and intrinsic merits, and the purely political body, being relieved of its superfluous impositions, may carry on its proper work which is the evolution of an administrative machinery congenial to the national temperament and the transfer of responsibility from the hands of the bureaucracy to it. Of course, thereby politics will be

relegated to an unimportant position and will cease to occupy the place of honour in the national programme. That is what it should be, unless we are to ape the blundering West and commit national suicide.

We need not be afraid that the country will deteriorate in consequence, or lack cohesiveness for want of co-ordination and co-operation among different spheres of the national life, or that the struggle with the bureaucracy will become more difficult. We must indeed acquire greater insight. If we are suffering to-day from thousand and one disabilities, they are not due essentially to political subjugation. In fact, the both are symptoms of some other deep-seated malady. We are a self-oblivious people, lost to the consciousness of the Ideal which is the knowledge and realisation of the Divine. This Ideal has to be made conscious and dynamic in every detail of our life. This is the first and foremost duty of every Indian. In spite of our boasted spiritual idealism, we are yet far, far off from its true conception and realisation. We still labour under the baleful and hypnotic influence of Western ideas, or our political bias would not have been so strong as it is to-day. The knowledge of and faithfulness to the Ideal therefore shall be the basis of national unity and our perennial fountain of strength in whatever sphere we may work. We invite the nation to divert its attention from mere political agitations to silent and steady works of national reconstruction. Let each devote his whole soul to constructive work, not forgetting his spiritual ideal of course. There may not be much of popular applause and enthusiasm in that, but no great things were ever done before the footlights. Let us remember that in India at least politics will not be allowed to become all-absorbent. There are things which the nation has cherished with greater love and care than political freedom. To their augmentation let our best energies be devoted. In spite of our cult of non-violence and soul-force, we are yet far from regaining the true spiritual outlook. Let us strive hard to attain the true vision, and if we are sincere, the truth *shall* reveal itself!

## MYSTICISM—TRUE AND FALSE.

BY PRINCIPAL KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

*(Continued from p. 17.)*

When a man of mystic temper enters politics he becomes a formidable force, a terror to his antagonists, the materialistic and Machiavellian politicians of his age. He spiritualises and moralises politics, and his attraction is irresistible. Such a man was Cromwell in England and Mazzini in Italy. Such men were Guru Govinda Singh and Sivaji in India.

India, the home and prolific mother of mysticism, has produced mystics in bewildering profusion, and the fountain of her mysticism is not yet dry. The Vedic Rishis were all mystics. The word Rishi means a seer, and a mystic is nothing if not a seer. But these Rishis were not only mystics, they were something more. They were prophets. In a later age a prophet of exceptional power was called an Avatara, and theories of Avatar-hood were propounded. Buddha was more than a mystic. He is regarded by the Hindus not only as a great Yogi and a great Jnani but as an Avatara. Many Western writers are reluctant to call Buddha a mystic, because much of Buddhist philosophy says nothing about Atman (anatmanistic), but that is wrong. Buddha himself never spoke of Atman or Brahman as there was much unnecessary talk about Brahman or Atman in his time and very little striving for self-realisation. His aim was eminently practical. An agnostic like Herbert Spencer or a humanitarian idealist like Auguste Comte he never was. Amar Sinha, the famous Buddhist lexicographer, calls Buddha Adwayavadi in his dictionary. According to Professor Rhys Davids, Buddha taught nothing new. The essence of all his teachings is to be found in the Upanishads. Even his order of monks was not wholly an innovation. The

Mahayana Buddhism of the northern school as outlined by Professor Suzuki of the Tokiyo University differs very little from the Vedanta, and that perhaps is true Buddhism. As Buddha was a mystic, so were the Buddhist Arhats. The Bhagavata, Saiva and Sakta mystics of later times were simply innumerable, and I need not mention their names. In Kabir, Nanak and Dadu of Mahommedan times the Moslem influence is traceable. But it is the Moslem influence of the Sufis; and according to Mr. Khuda Bux of the Calcutta University Sufism itself is largely a product of Vedantic thought. Certain modern theists of India who are the products of Christian influence of the Unitarian-cum-Protestant type try to make it appear that they were mono-theists like themselves, but they are not right, for Guru-vada and Avatara-vada have a place in their religious thought and experience. In the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal, Raja Rammohan was more a rationalist than a mystic. Devendranath Tagore had deeper religious experience. He was a truer mystic. But the emotional or Bhakti form of mysticism in the Brahmo Samaj found its best expression in Keshab Chandra Sen. The richest spiritual life in the Brahmo Samaj, I believe, was Keshab's. Both in Devendranath's life and in Keshab's life there was a strong ascetic tendency. But as actual asceticism or the ideal of absolute chastity and absolute poverty was realised by neither of them, they fall below the level of the highest mystic achievement. The prince of mystics of the present age, however, is Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ransack the world, East and West, you will not find another like him, and all that is true of Ramakrishna, the Master, is true of Vivekananda, the disciple. As for the fire and force of Vivekananda, it is matchless. Are Ramakrishna and Vivekananda mystics only or something more? I would rather not answer the question. Time will show. The following comparative estimate of modern Hindu mysticism in Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics will be found very amusing in this connection. Says the writer: "That mysticism has not died out of India is evident when



we hear the old cry for the One echoing through the writings of Swami Vivekananda. . . . A truer mysticism expresses itself in the Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. . . . And we find the same passion for oneness with God expressing itself again and again in the finest and most truly Indian hymns of the young Christian Church e.g., of N. V. Tilak, the Marathi poet." We read these lines and smile at the Christian bias of the writer, for we know what is what. Vivekananda's mysticism, according to the writer, is TRUE because he was a Hindu in the full sense of the term. Devendranath's mysticism is TRUER because in spite of his Christo-phobia (*Khrista-Vibhishikā*) his mono-theistic theology was a nearer approach at least to Unitarian Christianity ; and the Marathi poet Tilak's mysticism is the TRUEST, because he is a Christian in the full sense of the term ! Further comment is unnecessary except only this that the writer's opinion is based on Evelyn Underhill's preface to the English translation of the autobiography of Devendranath, presumably furnished at the instance of somebody desperately anxious for the prestige of the Brahmo Samaj which is now in a moribund condition. I have reason to believe that Mr. Kennedy, a learned Christian missionary, who has just written a book full of information on the Chaitanya movement of Bengal, has been influenced by the opinion of the above-mentioned contributor to Hastings' Encyclopædia when he opines towards the close of the book that Devendranath's mysticism was of a higher order than that of Chaitanya Deva who is regarded in Bengal as the very Avatara of Prema and Bhakti (love and devotion). The worthlessness of such an opinion is so palpable that it is unnecessary to refute it. It cannot but be treated with the contempt it deserves.

From all that has been said above about the influence of Indian thought and experience on the mysticism of the world, I must not be supposed to suggest that there is no originality anywhere in this, the highest fact with regard to man. Originality there undoubtedly is. A mystic is

nothing if not original. But if anybody thinks that originality means something absolutely new, then he must be very much mistaken. "There is nothing new under the sun," says the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes. "All great thoughts have been thought already ; we shall have to think those thoughts over again," says Goethe. Eternal Verities are ever old and ever new. A truth is called new when one perceives it for the first time though it may have been perceived by others before. The freshness of a first-hand perception none can deny. "The merit of originality is not novelty but sincerity,—the believing man is the original man," says Carlyle. All that we claim is that the highest and greatest spiritual truths were first discovered in India, and if that is a fact of which we are proud, our pride is pardonable. We are not so foolish, however, as to think that we are the "chosen people of God." On the contrary, we are painfully conscious of our present degradation, and so we call upon our people to rise to the level of our great ancestors and follow the examples of a few great men who are still born in the country. *Every truly great man has, I believe, a touch of mysticism in his nature.* Of the living Indians known to fame the greatest mystic, who is also a man of action, is Mahatma Gandhi. Arabinda Ghosh is another mystic who was also a man of action, but he has practically retired from the world. Among persons unknown to fame but who are true mystics, there are many Sadhus, Bhaktas and Yogis in all parts of India. In the highest mysticism there must be a deliberate renunciation of the life of sense. The highest mysticism is not possible without 'Dharma-megha-vairagya' or the spirit of intense detachment. Highest mysticism and asceticism always go together. Mysticism, however, has many steps like a ladder. Wherever there is genuine religion there is mysticism. It is not necessarily inimical to institutionalism, ecclesiasticism or the established forms of religion, but the mystic's method is inward. When a man prays fervently he is a mystic. When tears start to his eyes or he feels a thrill at the thought or name of God he is a

mystic. When he feels deep repentance he is a mystic. When he feels deep spiritual despondency or what is called the 'dark night of the soul' he is a mystic. When he feels a strong moral impulse he is a mystic. When he feels pure love and pure joy he is a mystic. The higher mystic sees visions and hears voices, and the highest mystic is he from whom the world with its manifold has vanished and who realises his oneness with Brahman.

Is married life consistent with mysticism? If married life can be spiritualised and the sex-life eliminated, it does not preclude the possibility of the highest mystic experience or the final realisation of oneness with Brahman. Positive mystic experience is always proportionate to the measure of sexual abstinence. A married man may attain a certain degree of mystical experience during the period of self-restraint. If the period be brief, the experience is brief also. There are some people who cite the examples of married Rishis and specially select with a purpose married mystics like Nanak, Kabir and St. Catherine of Genoa to make the mystic path easy and to show that asceticism is unnecessary and perverse. But they forget that these married mystics attained eminence not by reason of, but in spite of, marriage. They forget that these married mystics struggled hard to subdue sex-life and ultimately transcended it. That sex-life and spiritual life are mutually antagonistic is a law as immutable as any law of Nature.

A great difficulty arises over the claim that certain poets are mystics. There were many saints and devotees who were poets and whose poetry is the expression of their mystic experience. They only are entitled to be called mystic poets in the strict sense of the term. But when we come to those who were primarily poets, a great psychological problem arises. There may be a mystic element in their poetry as there is a mystic element in prose literature. But if their lives are irregular and unbalanced, then with all their æsthetic refinement and fine feelings and sentiments they have no right to be called mystics, for mysticism and pure life with the self-

restraint it implies always go together. Poets of the first rank are epic and dramatic poets. Epic and dramatic genius is massive and impersonal. Homer, Shakespeare and Milton are not called mystic poets by the literary critics, so that we may say that the very greatest poets need not necessarily have anything to do with what passes for mystic poetry which is nowadays so much in vogue. If Dante had not written anything but his *Vita Nuova*, he would have been called a mystic. But he is one of the greatest poets the world has ever produced, and the *Divine Comedy* though epic in form being the story of his soul's experience may very well be called a mystic poem. But we must remember that in spite of his occasional aberrations there was a strong ascetic tendency in his nature, and that is why Dante, the representative poet of the Catholic world, may very well be called a mystic. Another poet of the first rank was Goethe, but he should be called a philosophic poet rather than a mystic poet. As epic and dramatic genius is massive and impersonal, so lyric genius is intense and personal. As lyric is not sustained but short, so lyric poets must be assigned a lower rank in the scale. A claim to mysticism is generally made on behalf of the Caroline poets of the 17th century, most of whom were love-poets and religious poets at the same time. The chief names are Herrick and Crashaw. Herbert was purely religious. But when we come to the Romantic Movement of the late 18th century and the early 19th century and the poetry of the Victorian Age, the claim to mysticism on behalf of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Browning is loudest. Wordsworth is called a Nature mystic. Shelley, Keats, Browning and Rossetti are called Love-and-Beauty mystics. Wordsworth's Nature mysticism is pantheism and finds its best expression in his *Tintern Abbey*. Here is not only the poet's imagination but a true religious experience. It is not, however, the highest mystic experience, for to the highest mystic Nature is an illusion. Wordsworth's pantheism leads him to the false philosophy of 'Nature's holy plan', and if he had not a strong

moral sense which is not reconcilable with pantheism, he would have gone astray. The pantheism of his Tintern Abbey is tempered by the stern morality of his Ode to Duty. Those to whom his Tintern Abbey appeals but who have no appreciation of the severe grandeur of his Ode to Duty miss half their Wordsworth. If Wordsworth had not a strong moral sense, I would not have called him a mystic at all but a poet with a certain mystic element in his poetry, which is the product of exalted imagination. One remarkable thing about Wordsworth is that he never wrote a love poem unless his Lucy Poems, and She was a Phantom of Delight, are called love poems at all. As for his pantheistic experience, it should be noted that a mystic poet like Blake and a philosophic poet like Tennyson speak quite differently. To Blake "Nature is a hindrance," and Tennyson says:

"I found Him not in world or sun  
Or eagle's wing or insect's eye."

Still I should call Wordsworth a religious mystic and not merely a poet with a mystic element in his poetry because of the deep moral experience he feels—an experience inseparable from a true mystic. Here is higher intuition.

The most perplexing problem is that presented by those poets who are called Love-and-Beauty mystics. One truth here should be borne in mind. True Love-and-Beauty mysticism always accompanies high moral elevation such as we find in Plato, in the lives of many Catholic saints of Mediæval Europe and the Vaishnava saints of India. Some of the Vaishnava saints like Tulsidas, Tukaram, Surdas and Mirabai were poets, and I call them true Love-and-Beauty mystics. But when a poet's sensibility to Love and Beauty is without a sound moral basis, then I may call him a poet with a mystic element in his poetry, but I cannot call him a mystic, for mysticism without 'purgation' is no mysticism at all. By sheer force of imagination he may reach an exalted mood and utter fine and beautiful sentiments, but he is not what we Hindus call 'a man of realisation.' Much

is made of Shelley nowadays, and Shelley is a case in point. There is a regular Shelley-cult in certain quarters, and I hear of a certain educational institution in which the Shelley-day is celebrated. Shelley may be steeped in the ideas of Plato's Symposium. His Hymn to Intellectual Beauty may be the clearest expression of his devotion to the spirit of ideal Beauty. His Prometheus or human imagination may have union with Asia the Divine Idea or the Spirit of Beauty and Love. His "poet's eye may in a fine frenzy roll", and he may see the poetic vision of a new universe. But we cannot forget that he did not shrink from the picture of incestuous love between brother and sister in the first edition of the poem Laon and Cythna now known as the Revolt of Islam, and in his Epipsychidion he has made a mess of the whole thing by identifying Intellectual Beauty with a Daughter of Earth. If we look at Shelley's life, we see that his moral sense where love for women is concerned is very weak indeed. He deserted his first wife and child to elope with Godwin's daughter whom he subsequently married. Harriet the poor girl ended her miseries by suicide. After his second marriage he fell in love with several ladies, and in each case he called his love Platonic or spiritual. It is a mere accident that prevented his Platonic love from lapsing into carnal attachment. The less we talk of Platonic love of the Shelleyan type the better for mankind. Shelley's Love-and-Beauty mysticism is obviously the working of sex-complex. It is a clear case for the psycho-analyst.

Keats is a charming poet. He is also called a Love-and-Beauty mystic, but his moral fibre is pulpy. He is an amiable weakling who excites our pity. But a true mystic he is not, because there is no severe self-discipline in his life. As a man, however, he is decidedly better than Shelley.

Browning's intellectual quality is much higher than that of Shelley and Keats, but he is also a Love-and-Beauty poet. Love to him is all in all. The 'Law' of Tennyson is nothing to him. He makes light of the dis-

inction between good and evil. If he had cultivated a little self-restraint, he would not have eloped with the invalid lady who afterwards became Mrs. Browning and developed into a 'mystic poet' herself. Browning does not come up to the Hindu ideal of a true mystic. His optimism is provoking.

D. G. Rossetti is also a Love-and-Beauty poet. His sensuousness is aggressive. It is the beauty of the face of woman that specially appeals to him. A very strong sex-complex is evidently at work here. It is a very clear case for the psycho-analyst. We cannot call him a true mystic at all.

Rabindranath in our country is a Love-and-Beauty poet like Shelley and Keats and a Nature poet like Wordsworth. But Rabindranath is also a Bhakta Kavi (devotional and religious poet). There is deep devotion in his heart, so I may call him a mystic poet. He is a pious man as the term is generally understood. But as the ascetic ideal is repugnant to his nature, he does not come up to our standard of a true mystic. He is a mystic of the lower sort. Wordsworth is a truer mystic than Rabindranath, for there is a strong ethical urge or ascetic tendency in his nature. Rabindranath does not truly represent the culture of our race. No Brahmo Samajist can.

There are some pseudo-mystics who think that obscurity is the essence of mysticism, and so they assiduously cultivate obscurity. These people are not mystics but fools pure and simple. They need not be taken seriously at all.

Under the influence of Rabindranath mysticism has become a pose with a certain class of our young men. They have heard the word mysticism but do not know what it means. They think that to be a mystic is to look languid and sheepish and spout æsthetic nonsense. Romancing and sentimental mooning they mistake for mysticism, and they also deal in the second-hand rubbish

of literary criticism. Unless they study mysticism closely and cultivate self-discipline they will soon prove a nuisance hateful to gods and men.

## THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS—ITS AGE AND PLACE IN INDIAN CULTURE.

BY HARIPADA GHOSAL, VIDYABENODE, M.A., M.R.A.S.

The antiquity of the Indian civilisation has been proved and shown by good many scholars, both Indian and European, who take a sympathetic interest in Indian history, philosophy and religion. Many express their disappointment for the lack of chronology in India. True it is that nothing is more difficult to handle than the dates of Indian history. It is indeed like a pathless wilderness in which a critical mind finds obstruction at every step. But we should bear in mind that the true history of a country is the history of its people—their culture, religion, literature, arts, sciences and philosophy. If history means mere chronological records of kings, their wars, conquests and whims, if it is a "biography of great men" as Carlyle so dogmatically asserts, then the Indians have no history. But if it means the evolution of the community as a whole and of the individual in particular—the satisfactory solution of the riddle of existence—the realisation of a higher ideal of manhood in the physical and spiritual aspects of that mysterious and unconscious conglomeration of men called society, then the ancient Aryans have preserved in their monumental works on socio-religious and ethico-philosophical matters excellent materials of authentic history.

India is a land of multitudinous creeds and sects. From the hoary ages of the past she has harboured in her bosom downright atheists, agnostics, materialists as also devout God-fearing men. From the grossest idolater



and animist to the pious henotheist, from the crude polytheist and anthropomorphist to the unbending monotheist, every one, in short, has found a secure home in the spacious and well-watered plains of the sea-guarded and snow-capped Ind. As the Vedanta is the native philosophy of India, and as the Vedantic thought has formed the substratum of Indian culture all through her history from the Rik-Veda down to the present day, it should be our worth while to know the date when the Vedanta materialised into a definite shape so as to govern Indian life as a powerful force in the land of its birth. It will also be interesting to know to what a height of metaphysical speculation the Indian mind rose even in ages long before other nations were in their embryonic form.

The Vedanta is the most valuable contribution of India to humanity—to world-culture. It is the soul of India—the quintessence of her thought. To know India, one must know the Vedanta. To kill India, one must first kill the Vedanta. Indian religion is based on the Vedanta. The Vedanta is its life, its breath, its soul, its very being. To ascertain its date is indeed a momentous, though a knotty problem.

The Neo-Vedantism of Sankara, the greatest exponent of that philosophy, is based on the Brahma-Sutras, the Gita and the Upanishads. Yet the Vedanta truly means the Brahma-Sutras, a body of short, pithy and pregnant sayings, each of which is compact with a world of sense. Here we are concerned with the Brahma-Sutras of Badarayana, round whose magic personality has gathered a thick cloud of misconceptions.

That Veda Vyasa was present at the time of the Mahabharata is proved by the Mahabharata itself. The words वेदानङ्गम् and ब्रह्मसूत्र occurring in the Gita which is a part and parcel of the Mahabharata, though some scholars consider it to be a later interpolation, clearly prove the existence of the Vedanta or the Brahma-Sutras in the time of the Mahabharata. Professor Garbe's contention that the superstructure of Vedantic thought in the

Gita was lately imposed on the thread-bare skeleton of some Slokas or verses originally intended for the interpretation of the Sankhya system. He means to say that the Vedantic thought underlying the Gita was a forgery of crafty priests or an interpolation of the selfish sacerdotal sect. Thus he is another instance of the peculiar type of men who pride themselves on being styled with the sonorous epithet of Orientalists who have no sympathy for the East, which is so absolutely necessary for the right understanding and interpretation of the Oriental mind.

Now, if we succeed in finding out the date of the Mahabharata, we shall be able to fix the date of the original Brahma-Sutras also. Tradition which cannot altogether be relegated to the cold shade of neglect in recounting the history of a nation, ascribes the authorship of the Mahabharata, the Brahma-Sutras and the compilation of the Vedas to one person, namely, Vyasa whoever he might be.

Badarayana, the reputed author of the Brahma-Sutras, is only "a name and an intellectual power" as Max Müller so aptly says. We do not possess particular data or actual accounts about the life of this great intellectual giant. But India is a land of wonders. Greece may well be proud of her Homer, Socrates, Plato and Pericles ; Germany of her Goethe, Kant and Frederick the Great ; England of her Shakespeare and Newton ; Italy of her Mazzini and Dante ; and France of her Napoleon and Charlemagne ; but India may as well be proud of her Krishna, Buddha, Badarayana, Sankara, Kalidasa and Chandra Gupta II to name only a few of her mighty intellectual forces who have played brilliant parts in the long roll of her history.

The Vedanta had its mighty exponents before Badarayana. The famous hymn of the Rik-Veda—

उक्तं सत् विद्वाः बहुधा वदन्ति । अग्निं यमं सातविश्वम् आहुः ॥—

is an incontestable proof of the existence of Vedantic speculation even so far back as the time of the Rik-Veda. In the Brahma-Sutras there is mention of the names of

Jaimini, Asmarathya, Badari, Kashakritsna, Karstnaji, Udolomi, Atreya and even Badarayana. These exponents of Vedantic thought preceded or were contemporaneous with Badarayana who finally reduced the floating thought and gave it "a local habitation and a name." He is the band-master of that seraphic song which fills the spacious field of Indian thought and culture from the 15th to the 5th century B.C., and which is going to harmonise the jarring notes of multitudinous chords in the throbbing heart of humanity.

There is some reason to doubt the identity of Vyasa which is eponymous with Badarayana, and Sankara does not seem to think of Vyasa as Badarayana. It would, of course, be unreasonable to disbelieve the Indian tradition that Vyasa collected and compiled the Vedas, composed the Mahabharata, the Brahma-Sutras and the Puranas. Western scholars who cannot brook the idea of the priority of Indian civilisation and before whose eyes Greece looms large as a world-power, are of opinion that the war related in the Mahabharata stands on no positive historical basis. Thus far they admit that the Mahabharata war was the war of the Kuru-Panchalas and that the Pandavas were only creatures of poetic imagination. Lassen, Weber, Monier Williams and R. C. Dutt hold this view. Max Müller fixes 1200 B. C. to be the date of the compilation of the Rik-Veda. He has divided the whole field of ancient Sanskrit literature into the Chhandah, Mantra, Brahmana and Sutra periods, and fixing 200 years for each period, has brought down the Sutra period to about 400 B.C. This fanciful division of Sanskrit literature into stated periods is historical anarchy in the name of scientific history. In short, most of the Western scholars believe that the Mahabharata was composed about the 4th or 5th century B.C., that originally it contained no reference to the Pandavas, that they were mere children of poetic imagination of later times and that they were afterwards interpolated.

Indian scholars place the date of the Mahabharata war about 5000 years back i.e., about 3102 B.C., the

beginning of the Kali and the end of the Dwapara Yuga, and so they believe that as Vyasa was present during the Mahabharata war, the epic was composed at that time. But Colebrooke, Wilson, Wilford, Pratt and others place the Mahabharata war in the 13th and 14th centuries B.C. According to the Mahabharata itself and the Vishnu-Purana, the oldest and the most reliable of all the Puranas, the time of the Mahabharata war is respectively 1520 and 1430 B.C. The Mahabharata as it stands at present is indeed a work of many hands—a poetic mosaic of variegated colours, but it cannot, on that account, be placed in the 3rd or 4th century B.C., though it is an undoubted fact that it passed through several recensions before it took its present form in pre-Christian centuries. The fact is that the Mahabharata and the Puranas were composed in their original forms by Vyasa who also reduced the floating mass of philosophical and religious opinions of the preceding ages in some Sutras called the Parasarya Bhakti-Sutras which passed current under the general name of Vyasa-Sutras or Brahma-Sutras before the appellation was used by Badarayana, the systematiser of the Brahma-Sutras in its present form about the 6th century B.C. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a profound Vedic scholar, has fixed "the period from 1400 to 500 B.C. to be the period of the Sutras and philosophical systems."

Truly it may be asserted that the millenium beginning from 1500 B.C. and ending in 500 B.C. was pre-eminently an epoch of *Sturm und Drang* in the whole of the Orient—in Persia, India and China, in the Near East, the Middle East and the Far East. The long period of the Chou Dynasty (1122-249 B.C.) witnessed the compilation of the Chou-li, the text-book of politics by Kuantzi, "the oldest statistician of all nations" in the 12th century, the birth of Lao-tze, the prophet of Taoism, and of Confucius, the teacher of propriety in the 6th century B.C. In Persia Zarathustra (660—583 B.C.) founded a new cult, and in India was inaugurated the Augustan era from the 8th to the 6th century B.C., which was never surpassed in other periods of world's history for its range of intellectual

activities, for the systematisation of spiritual and religious culture of ages, for the conservation of the culture of centuries.

In India the seventh and sixth centuries before Christ were an epoch of intellectual ferment, of encyclopædists, of researchers and investigators, of ascetics and Rosicrucians, of positivists and mystics who in their permanent forest-universities probed all abstract ethical theories, tackled all ontological problems, cosmological hypotheses, chemical, logical, philosophical and sociological questions from erotic science to pure philosophy, from the problem of bread and butter to "the problem of the Sphinx". It was an age of grammarians whose prototype was Panini who was preceded by scores of philologists and lexicographers—of chemists, botanists and zoologists of the Charaka school—of sociologists who compiled the Dharma-Sastras, Niti-Sastras and Srauta-Sastras—of the systems of psychology, logic and metaphysics collectively called the Darsanas—of the promulgation of a code of morality and practical ethics in a new and more practical garb by Sakyamuni—of the foundation of Jainism by Mahavira.

Thus the thought-forces that were energising the Indian mind were regulated into well-defined forms by those authors or so many Vyasas after whom they have been named. Thus Veda-Vyasa might have originally composed some Vedanta-Sutras about the 15th century B. C., but it was Badarayana who systematised the Brahma-Sutras in its present form about the 6th century B.C. The best intellectuals of the time did nothing but compile, collect, codify, systematise and conserve the race-culture that had been handed down to them from remote antiquity. That it was an age of questions and answerings, of criticisms and counter-criticisms, of doubts and explanations, may be shown by an appeal to the internal evidence of the philosophical systems. For, we see the six systems quote and refute one another. So their relative position is difficult to be fixed, except that they were simultaneously systematised.

There is another strong reason for placing the Brahma-Sutras in its present form in the sixth century B.C. Of the Upanishads, at least the principal ones, "there is not a single one perhaps of which the reduction is of a date anterior to Buddhism" (Birth). According to Dr. Bhandarkar the Brihadaranyakopanishad was written before 600 B.C. As the Brahma-Sutras seeks to reconcile the apparent incongruities in the Upanishads and tries to build a homogeneous system on their chaotic rhapsodies and apocalyptic visions, it cannot be placed earlier than the oldest Upanishads which "are not the work of a single genius but the total philosophical product of an entire epoch" extending "from 1000 to 500 B.C." (Deussen). Again, the mention and refutation of Buddhism, Jainism, Bhagavatism and such other more recent cults, and an exposure of their fallacies and defects with an exposition of the clear-cut dogmas of the Vedanta, place the Brahma-Sutras towards the close of the sixth century B.C. when Buddha lived and preached his doctrines.

The Sariraka-Mimamsa or Brahma-Sutras is divided into four books, each book containing sixteen Pâdas or sections and 192 Adhikaranas or sub-sections with 555 Sutras in all.

The fundamental doctrine of the Vedanta embodied in the famous saying, "Thou art That," means the identity of the individual soul with Brahman. "This great formula," says Professor Paul Deussen, "gives in these words metaphysics and morals together. You shall love your neighbour as yourselves. You are your neighbour, and mere illusion makes you believe that your neighbour is something different from yourselves."

The Vedanta is called Advaitavada or a doctrine of non-duality as it teaches that the individual soul cannot be an emanation but is the whole indivisible Brahman. Multiplicity of phenomena is due to false impressions, the result of Avidya or innate ignorance which prevents the soul from recognising that the empirical world is mere Mâyâ or illusion. To the Vedantist the universe is like a mirage. Moksha or salvation is the effacement of the

semblance of distinction between Jivatman and Paramatman, effected by the dawn of true knowledge.

The idealistic monism or the sublime theory of the Vedanta is like the "full flood of heavenly glory of the noon-day sun," compared with which, "the idealism of reason as it is set forth by Greek philosophers," to quote the words of Frederick Schlegel, "appears like a feeble Promethean spark, faltering and feeble, and ever ready to be extinguished." "It is true," says Prof. Deussen, "that Paul hints at an identification of God with man, it is true that Kant endeavours to explain the marvellous phenomenon of the categorical imperative within us on the theory that man as real ('thing in itself') lays down the law to the man as phenomenal ; but how slight the significance of these timid and groping essays as compared with the profound and fundamental conception of the Vedanta, that the God, the sole Author of all good in us, is not as in the Old Testament a Being contrasted with and distinct from us, but rather our own metaphysical I, our Divine Self, persisting in untarnished purity through all the aberrations of human nature, eternally blessed—in a word, our Atman." "If philosophy," says Prof. Max Müller, "is meant to be a preparation for a happy death or Euthanasia, I know of no better preparation for it than the Vedanta philosophy."

## JESUS THE CHRIST.

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA.

### II.

As he grew up Jesus began to realise that the requirements of society and the requirements of God were in constant collision. Men were departing from the word of God and exalting theories of their own invention. They were observing traditional rites devoid of virtue. Their so-called religious practices were a mere round of

ceremonies that had lost their meaning. He saw that men found neither happiness nor peace.

As Jesus pondered over these things he became negligent in the performance of such religious duties as the Rabbis prescribed. He sought light from within. He prayed and meditated and communed with God.

For this neglect of external observances he was often rebuked not only by his parents and relatives but also by the Rabbis. They tried to reason with him. But Jesus had no faith in their words. He met their arguments by quoting scripture, and quietly followed his own way. But this constant wrangling and censure on the part of his superiors made his life a bitter one. Even in his youth Jesus had to learn the hard lesson of silence and patient endurance. In his search for Truth Jesus stood alone. No man sympathised with him. But this aloneness drew him closer to the source of all wisdom and truth. In God he found his Father and his Friend.

And here the records for the time being close, and we do not know anything about Jesus till they open again when he is thirty years old, and he begins his public ministry.

All speculation to fill up this gap of eighteen years of Jesus' life is vain. Some believe that he came to India to learn the secret of Yoga. Others will have it that he joined the Essenes and practised religion according to their methods. The general conception among Christians is that as the eldest son and head of the household, on him devolved the burden of supporting the family, for his father Joseph not being mentioned in the Gospels again is inferred to have died during the early youth of Jesus.

We may take it for granted that amidst the humble surroundings of an artisan's home with a large family of brothers and sisters and a widowed mother, Jesus worked at his trade to maintain the home, and with the leisure of Eastern life this left him time abundant to devote to religious thought and practice. While his hands were busy his mind was occupied with thought far removed from the little cares of home life. His thoughts soared



far beyond the limits of his surroundings, to regions where spirit communes with spirit, and during the hours of rest when darkness and stillness descended on the peaceful landscape, Jesus withdrew to solitary spots to pour out his heart in prayer, to lift his soul to the very presence of God.

Thus was awakened in him a firm conviction of the vanity, the instability, the unreality of this world. And when during higher moods he had glimpses of a real, enduring, ever-blissful Existence, the spirit of renunciation was awakened in him.

When he was thirty years old he finally decided to leave the care of his home to his brothers. And empty-handed he set out on his mission to proclaim to his fellow-men the great revelations that had flooded his mind. He had realised God as his Father, and that realisation he wanted to preach to the Jews.

Now it happened about this time in Jesus' life that a young ascetic, John the Baptist, who had spent most of his life in the desert away from people, practising austerities, burst upon the towns of Judea with a startling and terrifying message. With a voice like thunder he denounced the people for their wickedness. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he exclaimed. "But unless you reform you will have no place in that Kingdom." He told the Jews that God's curse was upon them because they were proud, selfish and cruel. "You rave against the oppression of the Romans," he said, "but you oppress your own countrymen. You hate each other, you cannot stand together, still you think you are superior to other races. You cut yourself off from the rest of the world, therefore you are in bondage. Reform, give up your evil ways, make ready for the king."

John, coming from the wilderness, his hair long and matted, his eyes blazing like fire, dressed in a shirt of camel's hair, lashing and threatening the people with his fearless tongue, made a tremendous stir wherever he appeared.

He himself believed, as many of the Jews did, that

from among them one would appear, who would free the nation from her national foes. He believed in the coming of a righteous king, and the establishment of Israel as a holy nation. He believed himself to be the forerunner of that king, the one chosen by God to prepare the people for the reception of that king. He realised that such a king could not succeed unless the Jews changed their evil ways. Brutal force could never conquer the powerful Romans ; it was soul-force alone that could liberate the nation. That soul-force he preached in his forcible language. He wanted to rouse the people, to startle them, to awaken them. He wanted to cause them to tremble because of their wickedness, to make them shake off their spiritual lethargy, to turn them to a holy life.

And the people asked him, "What shall we do then?" John answered, "Do not think that you are holy because you are Jews. Show holiness in your life, in your deeds. Don't despise people of lower rank. Help them with your riches. Don't be cruel to them. Live in peace among yourselves, and do violence to no man."

The nation at that time, we must remember, was in a state of great national excitement. The tyranny and extortions of the Roman governors, and their determined efforts to force upon the Jews their own beliefs and customs had led to repeated revolts. In these revolts thousands of the bravest Jews had lost their lives. The hatred against the foreign rulers was intense. So when John proclaimed that a king from amongst themselves would soon deliver them, the whole nation was expectant. Multitudes flocked to hear John. They followed him wherever he went.

As a symbol of cleansing from sin, John baptised in the waters of the river Jordan those who wished to live a holy life and become partakers of the new kingdom. People of all ranks submitted to the baptism.

Many thought that this spirited, forceful ascetic would offer to become himself their ruler. But John declared that he had no such intentions. "I indeed baptise you with water," he cried out, "but he that comes

after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptise you with fire from above. The righteous he will gather unto himself, but sinners he will reject even as the wheat is gathered into barns but the chaff is burned in the fire."

Tidings of the desert preacher and his wonderful announcement spread throughout Galilee. The message reached the peasants in the remotest hill-towns and the fisher folk by the sea. In Nazareth it was told in the market place and discussed in the shops. And when Jesus received the news he at once left his trade, bade farewell to his mother, and followed those who were flocking to the river.

Jesus and John were cousins, but they had no direct acquaintance with each other. Jesus' life had been spent in Nazareth in Galilee, that of John in the wilderness of Judea. They had had no communication with each other. They were of about the same age, and Jesus no doubt had heard that John's birth like his own had been announced by an angel who predicted a great future for the child. He probably also knew that from his youth John had lived alone in solitude observing great austerity. Himself bound to support the family he perhaps had often envied John his greater freedom to devote all his time to communion with God.

And now, when he heard that John preached the coming of Christ, Jesus felt an irresistible desire to meet his cousin. It was as if John were calling him, were crying over the land in the hope that his voice might reach the future king, that such a king might step forward and announce himself as the deliverer of the Jews. Jesus felt that his time had come, that he must proclaim himself as the king of righteousness, the son of God.

John, also, had heard about Jesus' wonderful birth, his revelation at Jerusalem, and his saintly life. Sometimes he thought that his cousin was the Messiah he was expecting. But of this he had no positive proof. The fact that Jesus for so many years remained in obscurity, giving no evidence of his mission, made him doubt. It

had been revealed to him that the Messiah would come to him to be baptised, and that a sign of his greatness would then be given. He therefore waited believing that in God's own time all would be made plain.

At last, from the pressure of the multitude Jesus stepped forward facing John. John was startled. At a glance he recognised Jesus' purity and lofty spirit. Here was the man he had been waiting for so ardently ; here was the king he had announced. Never had he met a human being so noble in bearing and appearance, so self-contained, with a face so calm and peaceful, with eyes beaming with an inward light.

There was a glance of mutual recognition.

Then, in a sweet, quiet voice, Jesus asked to be baptised.

John drew back. Was he, an ordinary man, to baptise the Christ? Was he to cleanse from sin him who was sinless? With his arms lifted to heaven he exclaimed, "I need be baptised of thee, and cometh thou to me?"

With firm yet gentle authority, Jesus replied, "Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness."

John, yielding, led Jesus down into the river, and lowered him beneath the water.

Upon coming up out of the water, Jesus knelt down in prayer on the bank of the river. A new and important era was opening before him. He was to enter upon a wider stage. The conflict of his life would begin. The kingdom he had come to earth to establish was the opposite of what the Jews expected. Upon him depended the salvation of the fallen race. It was not his mission to conquer the Romans, but to help the Jews to conquer their sinful tendencies, to help the nation to cleanse their own hearts, to do away with their evil practices.

As Jesus pours out his soul in prayer pleading for strength to carry out his mission, the heavenly Father Himself answers the petition of His son. A beam of light shines down from the heavens, and taking the form

of a dove of purest light, emblem of love, descends upon the head of Jesus. And from the heavens a voice was heard saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

John deeply moved seeing Jesus pray so earnestly, and then witnessing the strange phenomena in response to Jesus' supplication, stretching out his hand, and pointing to Jesus, in exaltation calls out, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."

Jesus, now strengthened in his own conviction, and assured of God's loving guidance, quietly withdraws from the scene. Slowly he makes his way to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate his mission, to surrender himself to God. By fasting and prayer he is to brace himself for the painful path he must travel.

*(To be continued.)*

## A NEW VEDANTA CENTRE IN AMERICA.

BY NINA MACDONALD.

When, in the latter part of September, 1925, Swami Prabhavananda left San Francisco for a trip to the States of Oregon and Washington, it was with no definite hope of being able to establish a new Vedanta Centre before he returned. His object is best expressed in his own words: "My only desire is to sow the seed. The harvest is in the hands of God."

Happily, however, the Swami's lectures and lessons in Portland, Oregon, met with instant and joyous response. Earnest souls were hungering and thirsting for the truth he so lovingly, clearly and convincingly presented to them, and when the week's lectures were ended, he was asked to stay with them and establish a Centre in their city. To that end he returned to Portland as soon as he had completed his itineracy farther north.

As I had been a constant attendant at the Swami's lectures in Tacoma, Washington, 145 miles north of Portland, I had learned something of the Vedanta Philosophy and was eager to learn more of what seemed to me the purest and sweetest teaching ever presented to the world. Therefore, when I received an invitation to attend the opening of the Portland Centre, I gladly accepted it, for my heart told me that, in Swami Prabhavananda, I had, after long, weary years of seeking, found a true teacher of a true teaching.

Mrs. Clara M. Pettee, of San Francisco, who for more than 20 years have given her life in utter devotion to Vedanta and its teachers, had come north with the Swami to act as his secretary on the trip. She wrote me that Swami Prakashananda was coming from San Francisco to dedicate the new Centre, and that she hoped I could come down for the opening.

To a novice like me all this sounded vastly interesting. We of the Occident are always curious about the Orient. To us the East savors of mystery, symbolism and elaborate ceremonial. Certainly the Swami's Tacoma lectures had been clear and simple enough. But I said to myself: "*They* were 'different'. At the opening of the Centre, I shall surely see something of that 'East' of which we hear so much."

Now that it is all over, I hardly know what I did expect. Mrs. Pettee had written me: "A blessing is in store for you." Assuredly I expected that, but I was looking for that blessing to be borne to me—in part, at least—on the wings of mystic symbolism and picturesque Oriental ceremonial.

And what did I find? I found, on the top floor of an office building, a little hall with a seating capacity of perhaps a hundred. The windows, hung with soft grey draperies, had black valances, on which was embroidered in both Sanskrit and English the sacred name—Om.

Two pictures hung on the freshly tinted walls—one of the boy Christ, the other a large and very beautiful

likeness of Swami Vivekananda, the beloved disciple of the Holy One.

The platform, banked with the colourful flowers of autumn, held the reading desk, one large and one small chair and a rug. Soft black curtains hung at the back, before the door leading into the little room that will serve as the Swami's office.

The severe purity of the entire effect was rendered doubly impressive by its absolute simplicity. Already an atmosphere of holy calm seemed to hover over the little chapel, "swept and garnished" and awaiting its dedication to the Master's use.

Though arriving almost half an hour before the time set for the opening of the services, I found a goodly number were ahead of me, and when, at 8 o'clock, a young girl unobtrusively took her place at the piano to play the opening number, the room was filled almost to capacity.

As the strains of music died away, Swami Prabhavananda and Swami Prakashananda came on the platform from the little inner room.

After a simple word of love and greeting to us all, Swami Prabhavananda introduced to us Swami Prakashananda in a few heartfelt words.

The elder Swami rose, and I felt all about me a hush of expectancy vibrant with deep feeling.

It may be that those long accustomed to Vedanta services become used to the chanting of the Swami and do not thrill to it as I do, but for me the solemnly chanted words are strangely, hauntingly beautiful.

As the sonorous tones ceased—not to die, but rather to blend with the faint fragrance of incense that filled the air—the Swami, in a simple, heart-reaching prayer, invoked God's blessing on the new Centre and dedicated the little chapel to His use. Only a few words—artless indeed in their phrasing when compared with the ornate prayers heard in our Western churches—but at their close

my eyes were brimming with tears, and I am sure that in this I was not alone among the hearers.

I had intended to take notes of the lecture—to tell you something, at least, of what the Swami told us, but I could only listen breathlessly as, with those other thirsty souls, I drank deeply of the limpid waters of soul-life pouring forth crystal-clear from their Infinite Source—the Fountain of Truth Itself.

Reverently we listened to words so simple that a little child could understand, yet so great that our minds, our hearts—yes, our very souls—were driven to their utmost intensity of concentration in an effort to compass even a moiety of their far-flung significance.

I know that he spoke on the Universality of the Vedanta Philosophy and its Message to the Western World—but . . . Oh! he spoke of so much more!—tenderly, humbly, yet with a power that carried to our listening souls the conviction that here was one who, from the Courts of the Inner Temple, spoke of that which he *knew* through *realisation*.

As truly of him as of the Man of Galilee may it be said: "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

All too soon came the closing words, and, as we bowed our heads to receive his blessing, I felt sure that in the hearts of each and every one of us had been awakened and quickened the longing for God which, in the fulness of time, will increase in intensity until we, too, striving ever upward, will attain to true and full realisation.

Thus, on Friday, the sixth day of November, 1925, was opened the Vedanta Centre of Portland, Oregon, on the eastern shore of the Western Sea and the western rim of the Western world.

Not with elaborate ceremonial and stately music, as I had expected, but amid the matchless beauty of lovely flowers and the calming fragrance of drifting incense, with a simple prayer to the All-Father-Mother God for help and guidance, by the beloved Swami in whose face shone



the radiance of Love Divine, was the little chapel consecrated to the spreading of the Truth, the attainment of God-consciousness, which, if realised, will bring to many in this new field in the Western World Light, Joy, Peace Supernal.

## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

बादरायणिरुवाच ।

स एवमाशंसित उद्धवेन भागवतमुख्येन दाशार्हमुख्यः ॥

सभाजयन्भृत्यवचो मुकुन्दस्तमात्रभाषे श्रवणीयवीर्यः ॥ १ ॥

Suka said :

1. Being thus asked by the great devotee Uddhava, Sri Krishna, the Chief of the Dasarhas—whose mighty deeds are worth hearing—praised his servant's question and spoke to him.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

बार्हस्पत्य स वै नात्र साधुर्वै दुर्जनेरितैः ॥

दुरुक्तैर्भिन्नमात्मानं यः समाधातुमीश्वरः ॥ २ ॥

The Lord said :

2. O disciple of Brihaspati, there is not in the world a sage who can control his mind when it has been pierced by harsh words hurled by the wicked.

न तथा तप्यते चिद्धः पुमान्द्राणैः सुमर्मणैः ॥

यथा तुदन्ति मर्मस्था ह्यसतां परुषेष्ववः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Arrows penetrating the most vital parts of a man do not so wound him as do the harsh words of the wicked which rankle in the bosom for ever.

कथयन्ति महत्पुण्यमितिहासमिहोद्धव ॥

तमहं वर्णयिष्यामि निबोध सुसमाहितः ॥ ४ ॥

केनचिद्विश्रुणा गोतं परिभूतेन दुर्जनैः ॥

स्मरता धृतियुक्तेन विपाकं निजकर्मणाम् ॥ ५ ॥

4—5. O Uddhava, there is a fine story on this subject which is full of spiritual significance. I am narrating it to you. Listen to it with all attention. It was recited by a mendicant who had been maltreated by the wicked, but who bore it with patience, considering it as but the effect of his own past deeds.

अवन्तिषु द्विजः कश्चिदासीदाढ्यतमः श्रिया ॥

वार्तावृत्तिः कदर्यस्तु कामी लुब्धोऽतिकोपनः ॥ ६ ॥

6. There lived in Avanti a Brahmana who was immensely rich, but who led a miserable life, doing business, and was greedy, avaricious and exceedingly irritable.

ज्ञातयोऽतिथयस्तस्य वाङ्मात्रेणापि नाचिताः ॥

शून्यावसथ आत्मापि काले कामैरनर्चितः ॥ ७ ॥

7. He never greeted his relatives or guests with kind words even, and living in that God-forsaken house he never gave his own body even occasional comforts.

दुःशीलस्य कदर्यस्य दुहन्ते पुत्रदान्धवाः ॥

दारा दुहितरो भृत्या विषण्णा नाचरन्प्रियम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. As he led such an impious and despicable life, his sons and relatives did not like him, and his wife, daughters and servants were sad and did not act up to his wishes.

तस्यैवं यक्षवित्तस्य च्युतस्योभयलोकतः ॥

धर्मकामविहीनस्य चुक्रुधुः पञ्चभागिनः ॥ ९ ॥

9. As he took pleasure only in hoarding money, and never cared for the acquisition of virtue or the legitimate

satisfaction of desires, he lost both this life and the next, and the five sharers<sup>1</sup> of his wealth were wroth.

[1 *Five sharers* &c.—Viz. the gods, the seers, the manes, men and animals, who are entitled to daily offerings from a householder.]

तद्वध्यानविस्मस्तपुण्यस्कन्धस्य भूरिद ॥

अर्थोऽप्यगच्छन्निधनं बहुयासपरिश्रमः ॥ १० ॥

10. O generous one, through his disregard of them his stock of merits<sup>1</sup> was exhausted, and that wealth, too, which he was at such pains to accumulate, vanished.

[1 *Merits*—that portion which had contributed to wealth.]

ज्ञातयो जगृहुः किंचित्किंचिद्दस्यव उद्धव ॥

दैवतः कालतः किंचिद्ब्रह्मवन्द्योर्नृपार्थिवात् ॥ ११ ॥

11. O Uddhava, some of that wretched Brahmana's wealth was taken by his relatives and some by robbers ; some part was destroyed by accident or worn out through the lapse of time, and some of it was taken by men or kings.

स एवं द्रविणे नष्टे धर्मकामविवर्जितः ॥

उपेक्षितश्च स्वजनैश्चिन्तामाप दुरत्ययाम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. When his wealth was thus gone and he was ignored by his own people, he was exceedingly anxious about his future, for he had neglected the acquisition of virtue or the legitimate satisfaction of desires.

तस्यैवं ध्यायतो दीर्घं नष्टरायस्तपस्विनः ॥

खिद्यतो दाष्पकण्ठस्य निर्वेदः मुमहानभूत् ॥ १३ ॥

13. He was a penniless man now, in dire extremities, and as he was thus reflecting long on his condition—his voice choked with repentance,—he was seized with a tremendous disgust for the world.

स चाहेदमहो कष्टं वृथात्मा मेऽनुतापितः ॥

न धर्माय न कामाय यस्यार्थायास ईदृशः ॥ १४ ॥

14. And he said to himself : Woe, alas, unto me ! I have for nothing tormented the body in this mad quest

for riches, neglecting the acquisition of virtue and the legitimate satisfaction of desires.

प्रायेणार्थाः कदर्याणां न सुखाय कदाचन ॥

इह चात्मोपतापाय मृतस्य नरकाय च ॥ १५ ॥

15. Riches seldom bring happiness to the despicable man. They only cause the mortification of the body while one is alive, and pave the way to hell<sup>1</sup> after one is dead.

[<sup>1</sup> Hell—because of the misuse of wealth.]

यशो यशस्विनां शुद्धं श्लाघ्या ये गुणिनां गुणाः ॥

लोभः स्वल्पोऽपि तान्हन्ति श्वित्रो रूपमिवेप्सितम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. Even a modicum of greed is enough to destroy the untarnished reputation of a renowned man, and the most praiseworthy attributes of a virtuous man, as leucoderma spoils the most graceful features.

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

PARADISE.—By George Chainey. Published by the Christopher Publishing House, Boston. Pp 121. Price \$2.00 (net).

Mr. Chainey who first belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, then to the Unity Church and afterwards to the Liberal and Ethical Society in Boston, has brought out this volume with a view to show the way to 'Paradise.' Of course, "one who has found this glorious land can simply tell to others." The Paradise he speaks of is not what, according to the Bible, had been in the Garden of Eden and was lost after the fall of Adam, but is "the undetermined and undefinable state of conscious and intelligent communion with the loving living God." One who has attained to this state sees "Earth in Heaven, Heaven in Earth; Each in All, All in Each; Man in God, and God in Man" and casting out

"Gods and Religions of creeds and traditions" reaches out "to the Living God and to the Religion that is greater than all the religions." The author in these pages has given a figurative meaning of the names and incidents of the Bible and takes a position which will save one from all bigotry and fanaticism. Nice print and get-up is an attractive feature of the book.

"SHIKSHY PRAKRITIR PANTHA.—By Kunja Behari Har, M.A., B.L., B.T., Superintendent of the Normal School, Chittagong. Pp. 203. Price, Re. 1-8.

This is a Bengali translation of the first three parts of Rousseau's famous book 'Emile.' Though the theories, propounded by the great French thinker regarding the education of boys, first met with a great opposition from all quarters, they have afterwards, to a great extent, influenced the educational policy in many countries. We congratulate the author for bringing out the present volume, which will be undoubtedly a great benefit to Bengali-knowing teachers. A better print of the book would have been welcome.

THE BOOK OF THE BELOVED, a Modern Epic Poem.—By J. C. Johnston. Published by Lund, Humphries & Co., Ltd., 3 Amen Corner, London. Pp. XVIII + 474. Price not mentioned.

*The Book of the Beloved* is written mostly in free verse and is divided into three parts, *The Book of the Garden*, *The Book of Images*, and *The Book of God*. "*The Book of the Garden* has described the human soul in its relations with the world of sense; *The Book of Images*, the soul in its relation with itself; *The Book of God* describes the soul in its relations with the Divine World." The theme is beautiful and worthy to be sung in an epic, but the present poem, we are sorry to admit, has failed to do proper justice to it. The author has unnecessarily introduced occult elements into his poem. For, the mysticism which makes art sublime is not occultism, but subtle and sublime feeling. The printing and get-up are excellent.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE POET OR THE SAINT?

The recent controversy between Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi (see *Modern Review*, September and December, 1925) ought to have attracted more thoughtful attention than it has done. The inwardness of it, we are afraid, has been missed. The poet does not really assail the poor wooden implement. It is not worth the poet's steel, though it be ennobled by a saint's solicitude and enthroned in the heart of India's national flag. It is the mentality that prescribes the Charka as the supreme remedy of all national ills, that is the target of the poet's rhetorical missiles. The poet's keen sense of the ludicrous bursts into flaming indignation at such a preposterous proposal. The fact is, the poet does not believe in tinkering with our problems. He wants us to work at the foundations. To him the Swaraj that is India's goal, is not a mere political metamorphosis. Unless there is a full and perfect efflorescence of all the innate worth of our manhood, the real Swaraj will remain unattained. His vision of the future India is an all-round manifestation of life, denying nothing, and embracing all its glories and triumphs,—a song which shall contain the whole gamut of harmonies in the limits of a single piece. That consummation is the poet's dream and ideal, and towards that end he wants all national efforts to be directed. Obviously he has no faith in the efficacy of an Aladin's lamp in matters of national reconstruction: it is ridiculous to expect the establishment of Swaraj within one year or any such specified time, though such specifications have a magic charm about them. Real work will be slow, very slow indeed. Much work has to be done below the surface, silently, unobtrusively. Consequently no mass movements can much help the attainment of our goal. The poet looks ahead and would gladly welcome present sufferings so long as the future was

ensured. He concerns himself primarily with the eternal laws that work behind the individual and national mind. He does not, in an impatient hurry to reach the coveted goal, forget that no achievement is permanent unless it is made through the operation of those laws. His hope lies in the surety of his vision, his fear in the apprehension that blind solicitude for the present might block the way to its realisation.

If such is the outlook of the poet, the saint is no less idealistic in his own vision. He also points to a light which is not of the earth, to the native grandeur of the soul, before which all transient achievements of man appear as nothing. And he himself is arrayed in that immortal grandeur. Why does he preach the Charka? Why is he 'Charka-mad'? Why does he preach non-violence? These are all expressions of a central fact, his philosophy of life. He is an ascetic and a man of renunciation above all. This ascetic ideal is behind all his mentations and actions. He preaches non-violence, because he finds no other ideal possible for man, and especially, Indians. Better they die than forego non-violence. Why does he preach Charka? Because it is the emblem of self-reliance and simplicity which are the very essence of asceticism. But it will be wrong to think of Mahatmaji enforcing his personal ideal on the nation. Hence it is that we often find him speaking in two voices, of philosophy and expediency,—a position not only difficult to reconcile, but also perhaps a little embarrassing to the author himself. For if expediency be the original motive, why, there may be alternative or supplementary programmes to his own. But whatever the thought behind it, the poet is justified in thinking that Mahatmaji's programme suffers lamentably from a lack of psychological insight. The ascetic outlook, at once the strength and weakness of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, is the real cause of the failure of his political programme. His is a partial vision of life, and offers a sad contrast to the poet's. He represents a section of life, albeit an important one, but he fails to respond to the manifold appeals

of the national soul. Life with all its colour and music waits in vain at his heart's door for a cordial welcome. His ascetic look chastises it to shame. He appears as a champion of a narrow cult of life. Life's accredited representative and spokesman he is not. The poet has a truer and fuller vision, though how far that vision has been made real in him is a matter of serious doubt. But so far as Mahatmaji has gone, and he has gone very far indeed in the pursuit of truth, he has made it his own. The poet's unrealised vision, however glorious and comprehensive, seems to pale before the actuality of the saint's life. How one wishes the two could be welded into a single personality! How glorious, how perfect it would have been!

The conflict between the poet and the saint is a conflict of the visions of life. Other things are merely details. And one cannot deny that so far as interpretation of national life goes, the poet is more comprehensive than the saint. It is no wonder that Mahatmaji is to-day finding himself in the minority. He is a worker at the foundations, and such work as his cannot become a mass movement without imperilling itself. Time is an important factor, and one must be patient. A reform carried out too soon destroys itself in the long run. His influence on the national life, indirectly vast, is bound to be, because of his philosophy of life, directly only partial. But one need not regret if a single man fails to stamp himself on the fate of three hundred millions of people.

#### WORSE THAN THE WORST TYRANNY.

It is said that many persons are moved more by the picture of distressed humanity in a cinematograph or a stage than when they are actually faced with facts of misery. There are some persons who will be all enthusiasm to send relief to a distant part of the globe, where people have been perhaps visited by the scourge of nature, though they can easily wink at the fact that their next door neighbour is struggling against starvation.



In the same way, we hear the cry that the masses are groaning under the tyranny of the upper classes, that the labourers are at the constant mercy of the capitalists, that the interests of the ruled are exploited by the powers that be ; but very naively we ignore the fact that we are eternally undergoing the worst suffering from ourselves. It is doubtful, whether anybody can oppress us more than what we do ourselves. But such is the witchery of imagination that we always look more to the outside than towards our inner life.

Even the most powerful man knows how tiny a weakling he is to his little self. He knows full well that he goes about in life, not according to his own way, but led by the whim and caprice of his ever-changing mind. He cannot do what he deliberately thinks to be right ; but he is always compelled to do what the freaks of his mind dictate. There is thus an eternal conflict going on between our dual nature—between our higher and lower tendencies, and we all painfully know how often the Satan in us drives away the God that dwells within our heart. A jail bird feels miserable, when he comes out of the prison house ; in the same way there are persons, who are quite happy in the life of abject slavery that they usually live. But there are others to whom this defeat to themselves is the highest torture. The tyranny of mind to them is worse than the worst tyranny in the world. What matters if our physical body suffers, if our internal life is not affected thereby?

The struggle of a man's life means the struggle to overcome the world. Something within us says to ourselves, we are much greater than the world, and so we are to control the world and not the world is to control us. But in actual facts, we find we are ourselves miserable victims to the play of the world, and so the fight ensues between the world and ourselves, which goes on until we overcome the world by getting a glimpse of some higher life.

In the world we find, oppression cannot continue for a long time. The most powerful tyrant ultimately digs

his own grave by the acts of his tyranny,—there is always the moral victory in the long run. Would that we could successfully rise in rebellion against ourselves and tear to pieces the meshes that bind us to thralldom. Had there been a handful of persons who have thus conquered themselves, the destiny of this earth would have changed, and humanity would have entered into a new career of life. The prophet said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome." This simply indicates that others can follow him and equally do the same.

#### THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS.

The institution of the Philosophical Congress as an annual conference, of which the first session was held in Calcutta in the last December, is a movement in the right direction. It was long overdue. Philosophy is a constitutional necessity of man, however neglected it apparently may be in the work-a-day world, and it exerts a silent, yet extremely potent influence on the national mind, and unconsciously moulds individual and collective behaviour. This observation applies peculiarly to India. Just as theories of state have a direct and practical bearing on the Western life, even so has philosophy a direct relation to Indian life. We are pre-eminently a philosophical nation. We have a tendency to view life in its relations to the Central Truth. Even such small details as eating, sleeping, washing or dressing do not escape the careful scrutiny of the philosopher. Too much philosophising is perhaps bad, but the national temperament is unalterable, and we can only make the best of it. Therefore, whenever our nation has found itself confronted by changing or novel circumstances, or any new racial, credal or cultural units have been added to it, the first call has been for a new philosophy of life. And none has been accepted as the director or arbiter of the nation's destiny, who has not furnished his own commentary on the three great books that enunciate the fundamentals of life,—the Upanishads, the Brahma-Sutras and the Gita.

commonly called the Prasthanā-traya. He was expected to interpret the eternal verities in their application to the altered circumstances. This has been the primal function of the philosopher.

The present age again calls for the exertions of the philosopher. Three hundred years ago, Bengal requisitioned his services in Vaishnavism. Things have undergone tremendous changes since then. So many varied and new elements have been imported into our culture, the border-lines demarcating races and nations have been so completely obliterated, that unless the philosopher comes out with his synthetic view of life, our nation will find itself lost in the wilderness. The supreme need of the hour, therefore, is the co-ordination and synthesis of the different philosophies, ancient and modern, with the added element of the new vision. The world is eagerly waiting for this new synthesis which will be at once a systematisation and a fulfilment of all the variegated experiences of mankind, from gross sense-perception to the highest mystic realisation. India is best fitted to propound that philosophy, for she alone, of all nations, has probed life to its deepest. Will the Philosophical Congress address itself to this glorious task?

#### THE BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

The *tithi* of Sri Ramakrishna's nativity falls this year on Sunday, the 14th February. We request all Maths. Ashramas and Societies observing the birthday to send us the reports of their celebrations at an early date.

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# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI.

MARCH, 1926.

No. 3.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

*14th January, 1921 (continued).*

The Swami said that when he had once declared to Sri Ramakrishna his life's ideal to be Nirvâna, he was reproved for entertaining such a low ideal. Sri Ramakrishna said: "The ordinary man yearns for Nirvâna. Have you not seen in a game of dice how cautiously the neophyte moves his pieces, keeping them in pairs to escape being checkmated, and how anxious he is to reach the centre? But the expert takes no caution. He deliberately turns down his pieces even when the goal was almost reached, that the play might prolong. And the dice become so attuned in his hands that he can cast them in any pattern he likes. Yes, the 'expert' remains in the world and yet enjoys its fun." The Swami was extremely astonished at the statement, and on his expressing a doubt, he was reassured that it was quite possible through the grace of the Mother. "She graciously makes the dice so attuned," Sri Ramakrishna said metaphorically.

N— reminded the Swami how he had once said that the joy of one day's company with the Incarnate God was enough compensation for the sufferings of a whole life.

The Swami replied: "Yes, it is true. An hour of congregational singing in the company of the Master used to fill us with such an exceeding joy that we would feel transported, as it were, into an ethereal region. But even meditation now fails to evoke that celestial bliss, or even a semblance of it. That bliss would abide in us for a week continually. We used to feel intoxicated, though we did not know the why or how of it. Who will believe it? It is difficult to convince any one. Yet I must speak it out.

"The ordinary man seeks Nirvâna because he has suffered. But he forgets to remember the tremendous joy there is in Divine communion.

"One day I arrived at the Dakshineswar Temple when he was taking his dinner. A number of cups containing various preparations were arranged before him. Some one perchance thought these an unbecoming luxury, fit only for a *rajasic* life. Sri Ramakrishna at once said: 'Well, the tendency of my mind is ever towards the Infinite. It is by such *rajasic* devices that I hold it down to the lower planes, or I could not talk with you.' 'How strange!' I said to myself on hearing him, 'others seek to attain *sattwa* by overcoming *rajas* through rigorous discipline of food, whereas he has to forcibly check his mind from going to the *sattwic* plane!'

"Out of infinite mercy, he once vouchsafed me the realisation that his every action and movement, nay, even his footfall was meant for the good of others.

"They have only a superficial understanding of the meaning of selfless action, not a clear grasp. For, if they are once convinced, how can they resist practising it? Only the self-deluded glibly talk of having understood it. Complete surrender to Truth is an indispensable condition of selfless action.

"It is desires that obstruct spiritual realisation. Could we but surrender ourselves wholly to Him! But no, we

only half rely on Him, lest He should not do the whole thing, and half rely on our own effort."

The Swami then said to R—: "Tell us something about God."

R —: "We can recite only from the Bhâgavatam of the *Kali Yuga*! (He meant newspaper).

The Swami: "Why do you think like that? It is real Bhâgavatam. How can there be any *Kali Yuga* for a devotee? (To others) R— sometimes says very nice things. The other day he told me a dream of his. It seemed almost real and deeply impressed me."

R— was persuaded to recount it. "I dreamt," he said, "that Sri Ramakrishna was very ill, and had hinted that the dissolution of his body was imminent. The disciples were very much cast down, and the Holy Mother was crying in an inner apartment. I had an idea in those days when I had this dream that the Divine Incarnate and man differed only in the degree of power. And as I stood before Sri Ramakrishna I thought within myself whether the love of his disciples could not induce him to preserve his body a little longer. No sooner had the thought crossed my mind than he said: 'Look here, there is a great difference between God and men. Do you know what men are like? Like persons walking a short distance into the waters of a sea, reaching utmost to the breakers with extreme difficulty and then coming back.' And as he said this, I actually saw an infinite sea spread before me, with men moving in the water, most of whom were very close to the sands, and only one or two gone as far as the last breaker. Sri Ramakrishna continued: 'But God can cross it and return in a moment.' And at once I saw him cross the sea and come back! He then said to me: 'The mind of the Avatara always tends towards the Infinite. Only a particle of his mind attends to the universe of which the devotees form a very minute portion indeed. How can they hold down my mind?'

"The Holy Mother also said the same thing. She said: 'My mind always wants to soar into the Infinite. I have forcibly kept it in a lower plane by various devices.

They talk of my attachments! They do not know that I can this moment sever all ties! "

The Swami: "I heard a beautiful story relating to her, told by herself. After the passing of Sri Ramakrishna, she was once crying, when he appeared before her and said: 'How is it? Do you think I am gone? Here I am! I have, as it were, passed from one room to another, that's all. You may not see me physically, but you *know* in many ways that I exist.' "

And so the talk ended for the day. But before he rose up, the Swami said to R—: "See how I have made you talk of God!"

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM.

A characteristic of the Indo-Aryan genius is its infinite capacity for assimilation. That indeed is the predominant note of Indian history. Of all races and civilisations, it may be said of the Hindu civilisation alone that it never antagonised or exterminated any cultures in whatever stages of evolution. Even the most crude of them were allowed a legitimate scope and congenial atmosphere to grow into their destined fulfilments and ideals. In this way does the phoenix-like Hindu civilisation survive every invasion of foreign races or cultures. It looks so passive! For a time it seems to go down before the onslaughts of the aggressor. A few centuries pass, and the aggressor has vanished,—not killed or driven out, but assimilated and absorbed within the Mother Church. This is the eternal way of Hinduism, the Eternal Religion and Culture. She conquers and fulfils by love. This is her panacea for all ills of national life.

If, therefore, India is again faced by similar problems of the conflict of races, religions or cultures, the wisest and the easiest course will be to apply the eternal Hindu method to their solution. To seek for other means is

to deny India's history and court failure. The problem of the Moslems need not be made an exception.

There are some who say that Swami Vivekananda was only a *Hindu* religious reformer. He cannot be accepted as a full-fledged *national* leader, inasmuch as he had not left behind any formulated scheme for unifying the Hindus and the Mussalmans, the two premier communities of India. It follows, therefore, that whenever Swamiji spoke of India, he only made a lax use of the word and meant only the Hindus. We, however, do not feel inclined to charge Swami Vivekananda with such a slack use of language. Nor do we understand how any one who has perused his life-story and his seven volumes of works can so glibly speak of him as a sectarian leader. We could prove to the hilt that all our present talks and sentiments of nationalism have been possible mainly through the grace of this man, and that if any one has taught us to feel proud of our national heritage, it is Swami Vivekananda. But that is not our present theme. We shall only say that he spoke of India and thought of India in a most comprehensive sense ; and in the Future India which was his eternal dream, Islam has as good a place as Hinduism. "Islamic body and Vedantic heart,"—that was his condensed description of that blessed consummation.

He was never indifferent to Islam. There are innumerable instances which prove his great admiration for, and wide-awake consciousness of the importance of, Islam. He never tired of narrating the glories of the Muhammedan rule in India. There was a time before he went to America, when he pursued the study of Islamic culture and religion for a number of days with his brother-disciples with a great love and appreciation ; and so deep was the impression left in their minds of its greatness and beauty, that whenever they would meet any Muhammedan at that time, they would salute him as a symbol of Islam. It is unnecessary to multiply instances. Readers of his life and works will find ample proof of his



complete understanding of the true relation of Islam to Indian nationalism.

Yet it is true that he has not left any detailed scheme as to how these two communities are to be combined into a united nation. What is the meaning of this paradox? Those who have studied him and his works thoroughly and carefully will have no difficulty in explaining it. The explanation is that he thought that the required unity can and will come mainly through the Hindus, through their eternal method of assimilation. He found no use in haranguing to the Mussalmans, or in writing long articles on the terms of settlement with them. He did what was just necessary: He set the machinery of assimilation working, and the effect will follow automatically. Assimilation,—that is the solution he has given to the Hindu-Moslem problem. And when he declared that his one aim of life was to make Hinduism aggressive, he indicated the *modus operandi* of that assimilation. And if he has succeeded in making Hinduism aggressive, as we are sure he has, certainly then he has done much better than merely formulating plans of the Hindu-Moslem union. He has not talked, he has acted.

How is that assimilation to happen? How to make Hinduism aggressive? Assimilation comes about by a re-definition of Hinduism. At the time of Buddha, Hinduism had been faced with similar race problems. Buddha so defined the Aryan religion that innumerable votaries found admission into the Mother Church, and to-day they occupy, some of them, high social positions. What did Buddha do? He did not preach any new religion, nor did he antagonise true Hinduism. What keeps men apart are never the essentials of religion or culture. It is the accretions and the corruptions upheld by traditions or interested priesthood, that stand between. Buddha simply stood against them and emphasised the essentials. The result was that the best elements in society declared themselves in his favour. This made the Mother Church aggressive—of course spiritually, and open her portals to all whoever would owe allegiance to her

universal ideal. Similarly, Sankara who found the Eternal Religion in a disintegrated condition, divided into a thousand sections and full of corrupt practices, made her self-conscious by formulating and declaring the essentials. This not only gave her an organised form, but endowed her with a new vigour and purpose, and made her a potent agent for assimilation of new elements. That process of assimilation is still going on. And the activities of Râmânuja, Chaitanya, Nânak, Kafir, Râmânanda, Dâdu and a host of other religious reformers form but links in that continuous chain of assimilation.

We have to quicken and hasten that process in the present times. What is the primary condition of that quickening? A new definition of Hinduism. We have to so conceive our religion and its ideals that there may not remain in our outlook or behaviour anything indicative of any remarkable difference from Islam, Christianity or any other religion. By bringing about a transformation in our own religious outlook that thereby it may become a harmony and synthesis of all religious ideals, shall we attain our end. As in the preceding ages, in the present also, such a transformation is possible only by emphasising the essentials. The first requirement is that we should organise Hinduism as a unitary body. Swami Vivekânanda pointed out repeatedly in course of his lectures in India that in essentials all the different sects of Hinduism agree, that it is the undue insistence on non-essentials that create bad blood among them. So away with the thousand and one details of ritualism. Let us once again stand united on the essentials of spiritual life. Let us live them in their pure form. This will mean a great change not only in our spiritual outlook, but also in matters social. The "don't-touchism" which, in its manifest as well as unmanifest form, is the bane of our religion and society, will then disappear for ever. Simultaneously with that, Hinduism will feel herself as a unitary body having a mission to fulfil. She will become as deep as the sea and as broad as the sky, and as strong and invincible as Indra's thunder. Then only will she be

prepared for, and indeed will have half achieved, the assimilation of other conflicting races and cultures.

Let us remember that though the Muhammedans are numerically and otherwise the most important minor community in India, yet from the standpoint of Hinduism, they form but a part of her problem. Her object is to assimilate all races and cultures that inhabit India. This is her divinely-appointed function in history. What applies to the Muhammedans applies equally to other communities. It is foolish to think, however, that in such an assimilation there is any thought of domination. Both parties must undergo change before they can meet in harmony. Hinduism has to change, so also Islam and Christianity. The change is not to be forced into them by extraneous domination. It is the changing conditions of the world that necessitate this change. We must change in the required direction, or we shall perish. For example, Muhammedanism must become more philosophical and catholic in her views. The world can no more tolerate fanaticism. Islam must recognise her spiritual affinity and identity with other religions. So also Christianity. So also Hinduism. When these changes have taken place, a new light will dawn on our vision, and religion which being divided into warring creeds, is to-day the source of interminable differences, will become the very foundation of the united humanity. In fact, this is the age of the Universal Religion. Time-spirit demands it, and we can but obey. If we do not adjust ourselves by forethought, bitter experience will bring this lesson home to us. Sri Râmakrishna used to say that it is the names that create all the difference between religion and religion. Could we but forget those differentiating names, we would discover a wonderful unity among all the recognised religions of the world. How true ! What is wanted of us is that we in effect forget these names.

This, indeed, is the consummation which Hinduism aims at by assimilation. It is pertinent to ask why we speak of Hinduism absorbing other religions or cultures. Of course, we do not mean that Hinduism, as it stands

to-day with its defects and corruptions, having a distinct individual tinge demarcating her from other cultures and creeds, will and can ever fulfil that purpose. Hinduism, to be fit to assimilate other cultures, must become impersonal and cured of her present shortcomings. That is what we mean by the organisation of essentials. There is, therefore, no question of domination. Yet there is truth in our saying that Hinduism will assimilate other cultures. The reason is obvious. Of all religions and cultures, it has been given to Hinduism alone to become synthetic and all-inclusive. It is an accident of history. No other religion or culture possesses the secret of that divine alchemy. If India is ever to become a nation, all the different communities shall have to unite. That can be only on the basis of religion. If it is not to be a mere make-believe, we must evolve a spiritual formula which shall be acceptable to all the communities. And who is better fitted than Hinduism to do it? Then again, the desired spiritual harmony can be organised only round a certain spiritual nucleus. And who again is better fitted than Hinduism to provide it? Therefore the model after which the future India shall grow, will be the gift of Hinduism. All other communities have to adjust themselves to it. Fortunately, however, that synthesis is one which is purely impersonal, the basis of every culture and creed, and it is spacious enough to include all types within it, without any way interfering with their essentials or characteristics, and allowing infinite scope and freedom for their individual development. This synthesis has been the special gift of Hinduism to the world in different ages, and shall be again in the present.

We request earnestly all Hindus to deeply ponder over this fact and be convinced of the purpose for which Hinduism has outlived innumerable historical crises.

The organisation of Hinduism on the basis of essentials, on impersonal and synthetic principles, is the primary need of the hour. To make her aggressive in the spiritual sense so that all fanaticism and religious quarrels may vanish from the earth, is the ultimate aim.

There may be doubts as to whether the views expressed by us are really those of Swamiji. But writes Sister Nivedita in her *The Master as I saw Him*: "His object as regarded India, said the Swami in a private conversation, had always been to 'make Hinduism aggressive.' The Eternal Faith must become active and proselytising, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate assimilation of new elements. Did he know that any community becomes aggressive, that any faith will be made active, the moment it becomes aware of itself as an organised unity? Did he know that he himself was to make this self-recognition possible to the Church of his forefathers? At any rate, his whole work, from the first, had consisted, according to his own statement, of 'a search for the common bases of Hinduism.' He felt instinctively that to find these and reassert them, was the one way of opening to the Mother Church the joyous conviction of her own youth and strength. Had not Buddha preached renunciation and Nirvâna, and because these were the essentials of the national life, had not India, within two centuries of his death, become a powerful empire? So he, too, would fall back upon the essentials and declare them, leaving results to take care of themselves." Here again are the words of Swamiji himself: "Hinduism is the very genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting. Of course, we could strike a blow now and then, in defence of our homes! That was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Every one had to learn that. So let these races of newcomers whirl on! They will all be taken into Hinduism in the end!" Swamiji thought that if the impersonal ideals of Hinduism were capacious enough to accommodate any religious and cultural ideals, the constitution of the caste system was equally elastic to assimilate new social units. Each new factor can well become (as it has been many times in

the past) a new caste, its respectability depending on its intrinsic merits or previous position.

The Moslem problem as it faces us to-day is more superficial than real. The Indian Muhammedan differs greatly from his brother in other countries in outlook and behaviour. Has not the genius of Hinduism already exerted a strong influence on the Indian Muhammedans? Further, are not the majority of them converts from Hinduism? If they still remain a hostile body, it is because the Muhammedan invasions of India occurred at a time when the Hindu society was just merging out of the social and spiritual chaos that the declining days of Buddhism had brought about. And the only thing it could do was to raise barriers of defensive customs and conventions against the culturally inferior aggressors. The need of self-defence over, and the reorganisation of society fairly advanced, Hinduism found time to set its assimilating genius at work, and the result was a host of religious reformers who preached a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. Political disruption afterwards interrupted this work of reform. We have to take up the work again. But it is good to remember that most of our differences with the Muhammedans are caused by our weakness which invites oppression and aggression, and encourages them to become inconsiderate and thoughtless. No one likes to learn from cowards. Had we strength enough, three-fourths of our troubles would never have been at all, and the remaining one-fourth would have disappeared at a slight effort. They also are eager to learn lessons. The Turks are learning from the West. So also the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Afghans. But have not we the Hindus a better way to show? It rests on us to demonstrate our ability not only to make ourselves strong enough to resist all kinds of aggression, but also to make others listen to us with respect. Therefore strength is what we require. And strength can come only by making the common bases of Hinduism conscious, dynamic and aggressive. In this way has Swami Vivekânanda solved the Hindu-Moslem problem, by rousing up the sleeping

energy of the Eternal Religion and setting her working along her ancient path of assimilation.

It is good to be clear in thoughts. Let all Hindus be conscious of the central purpose of their culture, fulfil and realise it in their life and help it in its onward progress. Yea, this is our destiny,—the Aryanisation of the whole human race. It is not a mere chance that all races, cultures and religions have come together in India. For here alone the unification and synthesis of them, on which the future of humanity depends, can be accomplished through the genius of Hinduism. Let us set ourselves to our task. Let us first unite ourselves on the eternal and essential principles of religion, not merely believing in them, but living and practising them. This way will come strength, and assimilation will go on automatically. There is no other way, no other way.

We invite the attention of the Hindu Mahâsabhâ to our observations. It had begun beautifully ; but we are afraid, its present political inclinations will hamper its true progress. Let it address itself to the liberalisation of the concept of Hinduism. It can at best do intellectual work, a great work in itself. If it succeeds in creating an atmosphere in which the realisation of Hinduism as the Universal Religion becomes possible, it will have done half the work required for the building up of the Indian nation. Harmonisation of the different creeds of Hinduism as well as of other religions is the most urgent task before it. This way it can render the best services possible to Hinduism as well as to the nation. Social reform will follow automatically, and regenerated strength will bring the thoughtless section of the Muhammedans to their senses. But the political bias will only serve to deflect its progress from the true direction and make it the mouthpiece of a political faction.

Thus has Swami Vivekânanda solved the communal problems of India. The great ones do not always speak the word of mouth. We whose vision does not penetrate deeper than the skin and can only guess the mind, do not know other ways of communication than the spoken

word. That is why we want clear declarations. But to the Messengers of Light, the world of spirit alone is real. It is there they make their communications. So has Swamiji delivered his message to the heart of the nation. Who that have eyes to see, can ever doubt that a tremendous change is going on in Hinduism and working in the right direction? He has not spoken, but he has done it. And it will not be long before Hinduism will reassert herself and fulfil her God-appointed mission.

## AN APOSTLE OF STRENGTH.

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA.

Swami Vivekananda was essentially a man for youths. He appealed always to the eternal youth that exists in all men—youth characterised by hope and enthusiasm, that lurks even in old age, and defying death lives, as it were, in our ashes. For even at overwhelming failures, when the darkening clouds of despair and disappointment surround us, when all the forces of the universe seem to be conspiring against us and we ourselves become doubtful of our capacity, even then does there not exist within us another side of our nature still unexplored and undiscovered—wherein we find the lingering hope and the hidden ray of light which inspire us with the belief that success in life may not be altogether impossible for us if only some obstacles can be removed which have stood as stumbling blocks against all progress? Even the worst fool at times thinks that but for some reasons he could surely cope with the best of men on earth; even the arrant coward is not ready to confess to himself that he has not the capacity to stand shoulder to shoulder with the most triumphant general and the bravest of soldiers; even the greatest criminal does not in the inmost closet of his heart think that he has not in him the making of a saint. This dormant fire in mankind Swamiji would instantaneously arouse



to blazing flames wherever he went. During the early years of his life, when he was seized with an intense desire to realise God and was passing through the stormy days of struggle, whoever came in contact with him, would be invariably caught in the whirlwind of ideas and aspirations which were all his own. And in after life whomsoever he would come in with personal contact, he would wake up the divine fire in him. His magnetic touch would fill even those who were advanced in age with a strength and enthusiasm rare even in the young. Swamiji was truly termed as strength personified—nay, he was more than that. He could kindle strength in others dispelling all minions of darkness—doubts and despair, fears and misgivings. To see him was to be filled with new ideals and aspirations, to live with him was to have the courage and strength to realise those dreams in life.

He could never tolerate that any man would lose faith in himself. For, nobody can do so, if he but sounds the depths of potentiality that is stored in him. Is not every man Divine? Is not every one a child of Immortality? And as such are we not from every point of the earth equally near to God and Heaven? To lose faith in oneself is to lose faith in God, and this could hardly be brooked by one who had found out the God in himself. According to Swamiji no man could go down so low, that he would not by an upward curve rise to a position of the highest of men. But very often man has to do that from a sheer desperation, impelled by the torment of heart-breaking agony, and emboldened simply by the tyranny of circumstances. But every man can achieve the same goal without that painful cost, if he only believes in his potential Divinity.

It was from the standpoint that man is Divine and has got infinite possibilities latent in him, that Swamiji looked at many problems that awaited solution at his hands. When we recognise the divine heritage of every man, all strife and quarrel, hatred and malice cease, and we attain to 'sameness' which is the goal of religion.

But generally man forgets that his neighbour is only his own self clothed in another form, and out of that ensues disunion and disruption that have disturbed the peace of the world from time immemorial. But what a great tragedy it is if we think only a bit deeper! So Swamiji cried in anguish: "This world is in chains of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressor." Two forces are at work throughout the whole world—the force of attraction and the force of repulsion. As a result of the conflict of these has come out the world, and this has made possible the growth of human society. There will be always differentiation, for absolute sameness is death. Relatively no two men are alike. Men will be always different in forms, parts and temperaments. And the stronger, more intelligent and powerful man will always have better success in life. It is foolish and idle to expect to stop that. But what is deplorable is that the stronger will try to live at the expense of the weaker and stand in the way of the latter's progress. "The work of ethics has been and will be in the future," says the Swami, "not the destruction of variation, and the establishment of sameness in the external world, which is impossible, for it would bring death and annihilation,—but to recognise the unity in spite of all these variations, to recognise the God within, in spite of everything that frightens us, to recognise that infinite strength as the property of everyone, in spite of all apparent weakness, and to recognise the eternal, infinite, essential purity of the soul in spite of everything to the contrary that appears on the surface." If we recognise this in social life, all strife between man and man ceases; and if national work is based on this principle, the world will not have to see from time to time the hideous displays of brutality by warring nations. Swamiji viewed with alarm the absence of this saving principle amongst the Western nations, infuriated by the lust of wealth and intoxicated by the greed of power, and he exclaimed that the whole of the Western civilisation rested on a

volcano which might burst at any moment and destroy the whole world. The last war has proved the truth of his prophecy.

A nation in order to live on earth must contribute its quota to the world-civilisation. No nation can live only on the beneficence of other nations. A man who lives on eternal charity will soon suffer a natural death. The nation which takes to begging as the means of existence will soon be wiped off the face of the earth. So was the warning of the Swami to India that she must search out, if she wants to live, what she can give to the world as the price of her life. That India has survived the onslaughts of so many conquests and invasions, that the inner life of India has remained undisturbed by the onrush of so many cultures and conflicting civilisations shows that India is not without something to give to the world. And so Swamiji with all the fervour of his being exhorted all to build the Indian national life on the old basis of religion, for only by so doing can India have an honourable place amongst the nations of the world.

About the internal problems of India Swamiji always advocated 'growth from within' and bringing out the latent possibilities of all concerned. During his time a section of people had a veritable craze for social reform. Though they have done, no doubt, some good to the country, yet as a result of the wrong policy of denouncing everything that did not suit their reason and taste, they have isolated themselves into a separate group, out of touch with the general mass. Our society has got many defects, it is true, and no society is without any. But all that is needed is to help the process of its evolution and not to suddenly disturb its even tenor of life by following some revolutionary method. So towards the social problems, his attitude was one of sympathy rather than of self-conceited superiority. He would say that this society existing for thousands of years has done much good, and it will do much more good in future, if properly directed. In going to build the future according to your particular plan, in trying to reform the

present, where some defects have crept in, you cannot neglect her whole past. If possible, just help society in its onward march, but do not retard its progress by any violent reform. It was a very significant, though poignant, reply of Swamiji, when being asked his opinion about widow-marriage, he said that he could not say anything, himself not being a widow. His opinion on these matters was: "Let the persons concerned decide their own fate. All that can be helped from outside is to give them ideas, which will naturally crystallise into proper actions."

It was his firm opinion that the spread of right education will automatically solve many of the problems that have faced the country. By education he did not mean cramming the brain with ideas, which it is not in a position to assimilate and translate into action, but creating favourable circumstances wherein the mind may grow naturally. "Education," according to him, "is the manifestation of perfection *already* in man," and that can be brought out only by freeing the mind from all distracting factors. "To me the very essence of education," said Swamiji, "is the concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I would collect facts at will."

In all matters, Swamiji insisted upon faith as the very essence of success. That India is lagging behind all other nations of the world is due to the fact that she has lost faith in herself due to various circumstances. If that faith can be revived, she will again be a power that nothing will be able to resist. To bring home this truth to the mind of all how significantly he would quote the examples of the Irishmen, who within a short time of their landing in America, the land of liberty and freedom, put on an altogether different look! And he would at times try to lash his countrymen into self-confidence by violent and harsh rebuke. "We have lost faith. Would

you believe me," he said once, "we have less faith than the Englishman and woman, a thousand times less faith? These are the plain words, but I say, I can't help it. \* \* \* Do you know it? You know more than they do; you are more wise than is good for you; that is the difficulty." As a remedy he would suggest that the Upanishads should be upheld, which are the mine of strength, and he asked all to stand on the belief that "we are the Soul." "So repeat these saving words," he would say. "Do not say that you are weak. You can do anything and everything. What can we not do? We can do everything, we have got the same glorious Soul. Let us believe in it."

To him religion meant strength, and irreligion fear and weakness. As a panacea for all the ills of human life he would suggest to all to assert that man is one with God. Behind every being there is the infinite Soul. But as there cannot be more than one infinity, the same universal Soul, omnipotent, omnipresent and immortal, is behind all. The more one can live in that idea, the less affected is he by the world and its misery. It was from this view-point that he exhorted all to know that a man becomes what he thinks himself to be.

आत्मनाविन्दते वीर्ये विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ।

"The knowledge of the Self gives real strength, and that leads to Immortality." But as a man lives in ignorance, he suffers and feels miserable. But that fountain of bliss is there in spite of our ignorance.

Swamiji, however, did not preach only monism and the impersonal idea of God. Monism is the last word of religion, and the highest perfection is reached by one in a million. As long as there will remain human weaknesses and failings man must worship the personal God. Hence is the necessity of the worship of Incarnations, the God-men like Buddha, Mahommed, Jesus etc., in whom we find the embodiment of the highest conceptions of religion. None can see the Father except through the Son. We, therefore, strive to realise the impersonal

aspect of God through various forms of worship that have been in existence since the beginning of humanity.

Swamiji in preaching all his ideas was not like those who soar too high from the human world on the wings of their dreams and theories. The dreamer in him did not get the better of the practical idealist. Though he spoke always from a very high altitude, though he was always forgetful of the weaknesses of persons who came in contact with him, and saw their little greatness thousandfold magnified, yet in his scheme of life he did not altogether overlook the factor of human failings. He was not unconscious that walking in truth always means a succession of falls. He knew that failures are inevitable in human life as much as successes. But should we sit with moping looks as we cannot avoid failures in life? That was the last thing he could tolerate, and had nothing but condemnation for such persons. It was a very significant reply that he gave to a man full of extreme Tamas, who came to learn religion from him. Before caring anything for religion whether he would be able to do some crime indicative of manliness, was the interrogation of Swamiji, for the man sought an easy way to religion. There is no easy road to religion as also to anything else valuable in life. The path to heaven will be always through the hell of struggle. Those who cannot stand that should better stand out of the ranks, was his strong opinion. "When the soul has wrestled with circumstances, and has met death a thousand times on the way, but nothing daunted has struggled forward again and again, and yet again," said he in his lecture on the preparation for higher life, "then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal."

This is a great lesson which we cannot be too much careful to remember, because dark phantoms of fear and despair dog our footsteps at every moment of life, in every undertaking of many of us—people who belong to a most self-forgetful nation on earth.

## MORE ABOUT AMERICA.

BY DR. BHUPENDRA NATH DUTT, M.A., PH.D.

The most important thing I have noticed in America is the method of organisation. The Christian Church has converted the old Roman system to the modern, and the Occidental world all over has accepted it. The difference between the East and the West lies in knowing the technic of organisation and applying it to life. The Oriental is a power alone, but ten Orientals are a source of weakness. One European is a source of weakness, but ten Europeans are a tower of strength. Two Englishmen make a club, five Englishmen make a colony. When they combine they are a tower of strength, they achieve something; but when we Orientals unite we do not achieve anything as we lack in cohesive power, power of organisation. We confuse private life with that of public life. We always go from personal to the principle. In this matter America and Europe are at variance with the rest. In America there are many political parties and sections; but on public platform they vote with one voice. For that reason they can do something. They will abide by the decision of the party and leave aside personal questions, and fight for the principle. We do not do it. By this power of organisation they are building up industries, commerce, and have become a world-power. A professor once told me that American civilisation is a commercial one. American culture is absolutely a new culture taken from Europe in recent years, and the science is taken mostly from Germany and France. They have become self-supporting nowadays. They say America is the growth of 50 years. Fifty years ago there was a wave of revolution in Europe, and the German refugees went to America, and being educated people they transplanted German culture to America. From the standpoint of commerce, American civilisation

is very great. America is a great stronghold of capitalism. America is a country of immense resources. Plenty of land is still unexplored, mineral resources remaining unexploited. There is plenty of room for everybody. A European pedlar in America starts humbly and ends his career as a capitalist. The Russian Jews when persecuted come to America and become capitalists. They can develop themselves there and rise to the highest level. For that reason it will be the last bulwark of capitalism. But along with that there is the labour question.

America is not democratic, it is a plutocratic country. The constitution provides that every one should vote, but the capitalists and millionaires rule. They make and unmake presidents and governors. Tammany Hall rules New York. People say New York is the biggest Jewish town in the world, but the Irish rule it. In 1913 a certain governor recently elected was at variance with Tammany Hall, because the latter wanted big spoliations in the shape of contracts, but the governor said that was against his conscience. They brought a charge against him and impeached him. Twenty-four judges sat on the throne and all of them had Irish names, and he was kicked out the next day. Mr. Murphy is the head of Tammany Hall. They say he is worth fifty millions of dollars. He never comes out in the public, but rules the party from behind. This is the American political system. People complain against it, but there is no way out of it. When one party comes to power they drive out all the officers from the president to the postmaster. When a new president comes to power he gets 2 millions of posts for distribution. To-day a man is a briefless lawyer and to-morrow he will be a big judge. There is no civil service system or bureaucracy. To-day a man is an ordinary journalist, but to-morrow he will be a governor. In this way they rule the country. Do they get economic justice? No. America is democratic in the sense that there is 'one man one vote' system. But after seeing the country as it had been my lot to see every stratum of society, I am prone to believe that there is no real demo-



cracy in America. Because there cannot be true democracy unless there is economic justice. Is it a land of freedom? Persecuted European emigrants, who with bundles of torn clothes on the shoulders make their way, work in factories and become somebody. Many think it is the land of freedom.

But if you look to the condition of poor Negroes, the other side of the case will present itself. This is a most tragic side of American life. They lay the blame at the door of the old English colonial government. The slaves were made free after the civil war. Later on by hook or crook the south disenfranchised the Negroes. The Negroes gradually lost their freedom again. Though the constitution provides it, they are not allowed to vote. They have to work in factories as menials. There is a great discontent among them. Their condition is like ours. They have no chance. Among the Negroes there are educated men, doctors, lawyers and professors. I have seen some of the Mulattoes passing themselves as domiciled Europeans or Anglo-Indians. The Negro problem is very acute. The Negroes are lynched and persecuted. When the white man makes a mistake it is passed over but with the Negroes it is different. When the Negro was emancipated he was illiterate. To-day by sheer dint of their own effort they have reduced the illiteracy to 40%. Every Negro in the north can write, and in the south they are more educated than the "poor Whites". Late Prof. Lester Ward narrated that whenever he in company with the scholars of the Smithsonian Institute went down south for scientific expedition, the party always used to get troubles with the superstitious poor Whites, but rescue always came from the unexpected quarters—Negroes. It is always the black man who understands something about science. The Negro is not inferior. But in the south he is superior. Still he is kept down. As a result of the Negro problem the question has arisen, What to do? The one section led by late Booker T. Washington said: "We need not go after university diplomas; we will not get equality with the

white people. Let us form ourselves a people by ourselves—a community within a community." But the other party led by Dubois and Miller said: "We want both technical education and higher education. We must apply for political and social rights". The fight is still going on. The American will solve the problem in this way. He says—"Let the Negro give up the university education. He will not be able to stand the competition of the white man, and the economic difficulties will crowd him out, and he will die out." A German Professor of anthropology, Mr. F. V. Luschon told me: "Yes, the Negro is dying out, that is true. But the Negro blood is being diluted and is permeating the white society." That means in the course of ages 10 millions of Negroes will be mixed up in the white mass. Many Americans no longer remain white, but they have become brown. In the south you cannot distinguish in many cases between a Negro and a white man. That is the reason why the Occidental says that out of the conquering Aryans and the black aborigines arose the modern Indians, and out of the conflict of colour arose the caste system. But I do not believe in this theory. That is my own personal view. If you see the Negro problem, you will be struck with its similarity with the caste problem of India. Once a drama was staged, called the "Nigger", the plot of which was that Clond, the governor of a certain state, did not want to give concessions to some white traders. But the spokesman of these traders threatened him that if he stood on their way, then he would be exposed that the latter had Negro blood in his veins. The moral is that in the south people do not go by the colour but by caste. My German professor said that his American colleague had Negro blood in him, and he knew it. Even Mrs. Wilson was suspected of having alien blood in her veins, because her family was connected with the Red Indian Princess, Pocohanta. This worked as a detriment to Mr. Wilson. How could Wilson run for the presidency when his wife had inferior blood in her? Another example. Many of the Red Indians

have white blood in them. Chakisaw and Cherukee tribes are civilised. I once met a young university lecturer who was a blonde man. On enquiring he answered that he was a Red Indian. I further enquired how he was enrolled. He answered—"In the states I am enrolled as an Indian. When I go to England I am taken as a Yankee cousin of my English relatives!" The Red Indian problem has not died out. There are about 400,000 of Red Indians in America. They are living not as pure, but as mixed bloods. They have died out as Red Indians, but they are living as civilised peoples. They have to live in reservations which are like the Kolhan districts of Chota Nagpur where the Hindus would not be allowed to settle. They till the land in a primitive way. Once I visited the reservation land of the Ojilewa tribe in Canada. I had two ladies with me. One was a Vedantist who visited India and knew her conditions. On enquiry I found out that every tribe has its president and secretary. I asked the latter—"Are you all pure Indians?" He answered—"No, we are not. The people will not admit it, but I know it myself. My grandmother was half a French." I met a pastor who had accepted Occidental civilisation. He said in despair, there is no hope for them. They do not get any chance to work anywhere. They have to fall back on the land and till it. They do not know the modern system of agriculture. In some of the reservations in the United States the railway system passes through the tribal land, and they manage to make money. But in other reservations there is an awful woe and misery. The misery under which the people are suffering is due to their adopting the white man's civilisation and not having passed through the intermediary stages necessary for the transition. We have found out that in this way America is a land of liberty. The American is keenly alive to it. The white man thinks that the coloured man must make way to him. On this account Prof. Dubois, the leader of the coloured race, said that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of colour. But the problem of Europe is

different. It is the exploitation of the majority of people by a handful of people. The problem of the United States also is exploitation. White labour complains just the same.

This again manifests in the Oriental problem. Fifty years ago the Americans wanted the Orientals to settle on the banks of the Mississippi, but just after the war they do not want any emigrant at all. The Orientals used to go as traders and merchants from the Bombay side, and they made a lot of money. The Americans said—"If you do not settle in the country, we will not allow you". Then Bengal traders began to come and sell linen stuff and go about as pedlars. Once a Sikh regiment was disbanded at Hongkong which crossed the sea and went to Vancouver. Finding the country too cold they went south. The Americans complain that the Hindus work on low salary, and they live in a primitive style. The Indians say on the contrary that they were persecuted, they did not get any shelter. The employing railway company gave them wagons to sleep in at the place of their work. At the present most of the Hindus have come back home. After the passing of the Anti-alien Act they are losing proprietary rights. There is nothing to be done. The Americans said in the beginning that if proper representation would come from the British Government, something would be considered. But nothing was done in that line. This stood in the way of poor Indian students getting education there. Any way, we had a chance in America. Several hundred boys went there as self-supporting students; they made their way by working in the fields, restaurants etc. In this way they got university education and became teachers, doctors and business men. But such boys did not get a chance in this country. In future they will not get any more chance in America. When I was in Berlin conducting the Indian News and Information Bureau, I used to get hundreds of letters from boys enquiring about the chances of self-support in Germany. Education in India is only for the rich, and the poor student has no

chance to get the up to date education in foreign lands. In those days the American universities used to exhort the Indians to come over to their places. But to-day chauvinism is running amock, which has resulted in America becoming a heaven for the Europeans and not for the non-white Orientals. Even the Armenians and Persians are allowed to enter, but the Asiatics living beyond Persia up to the frontier of Japan cannot enter the land as they are supposed to be unassimilable. To-day those Indians who became citizens have been deprived of their citizenship, and they have become a people without a country.

But any way we have lots of things to learn from America. The difference between the two races lies in their outlook. Proof. Lester Ward, the father of American sociology, said, there is no difference between the East and the West. The difference lies only in the world-view. If we change the world-view, we change the race. You cannot change the heredity, but through education you can modify the aspect of life and the attitude towards the world. In this way we should change our mentality. He prophesied about Japan long ago. They are going in the van of civilisation. Psychologists say that unless the race adapts itself to the new conditions of life, it will have to go down and be side-tracked for ever. If we want to survive, we must adapt ourselves to the new conditions, react to the new stimuli. Our leaders talk of going back to Vedic culture and doing all kinds of wonderful things, but we will not survive unless we change our world-views. We must adapt rationalistic world-views and social politics. We must take what is best in every country, and from America we must learn the dignity of labour. To-day there is a new group of sociologists who are moving towards rationalism. So they are going ahead. We must copy the American system of organisation and spirit. India must come out of her seclusion. Thus I say India must accept and imitate the American spirit

of organisation and the dignity of labour. This is the thing we have to learn.

And in return if we want to give something new to the world, then we must adapt ourselves to new conditions. We have to make some new original contributions to the world's culture. There is enough scope for the Hindus to give their best to the world. We must try to move with the world-currents and react to the new stimuli coming out of the same and must adjust ourselves accordingly. Then and then alone we can survive in the struggle of the world.

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## THE GREAT TORCH-BEARER.

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA.

Once the great queens of all the nations of the world met at an assembly to exhibit before the world their respective national achievements. They came there dressed in their finest clothings bedecked with jewels that cast into shade the blaze of the noonday sun, as it were. Their faces shone with the freshness of youth and pride of their culture. Fluttering they moved in the great hall, narrating to one another the stories of the countries they represented. In a corner sat a venerable lady, unnoticed and despised, though representing a country wherein flourished the oldest civilisation humanity has ever witnessed. With great difficulty she moved to the front, and as she was about to speak, her voice was drowned amidst the peel of laughter raised in disdain by her younger sisters. "Why, we don't know her," said they to one another. But undaunted the old lady said raising her high and dignified voice, "Listen to me, my dear sisters. Blinded with pride and arrogance, you seem to have forgotten me. I am your eldest sister. My country has supplied you with all your riches and wealth, material as well as intel-

lectual. Everything that is great and noble in you has been supplied by me. You do not seem to know that shooting up like rockets, you are mocking at the serene and calm star. But unless you again clasp your hand in mine, may heaven forbid it, your path seems to be strewn with perils." As her voice, sonant and vibrant, rolled in that great hall, they wondered at and bowed before her, yielding to her the place of honour she richly deserved in that comity of the nations.

Swami Vivekananda delivered his first message at the great Parliament of Religions held at Chicago. He stood there at the confluence of two mighty streams of thought. Before him was a sea of mind, "young, tumultuous, overflowing with its own energy and self-assurance, yet inquisitive and alert withal. Behind him on the contrary lay an ocean calm with long ages of spiritual development. Behind him lay a world that dated itself from the Vedas, and remembered itself in the Upanishads, a world to which Buddhism was almost modern ; a world that was filled with religious systems of faiths and creeds ; a quiet land steeped in the sunlight of the tropics, the dust of whose roads had been trodden of the feet of the saints for ages upon ages." A warrior-monk, he stood there, instinct with pride of country, and pride of race, and by no means inclined to yield as though the hoary faith he embodied was in aught inferior to the noblest there. India was not to be shamed before the hurrying, arrogant West by this her envoy and her son. He brought her message, he spoke in her name, and the heald remembered the dignity of the sacred land whence he came. Purposeful, virile and strong, he stood out, a prince among men, able to hold his own, and delivered the message of his motherland before the world at large.

Swami Vivekananda delivered before that great assembly a message which the world needs now and then to readjust itself and to save itself from an imminent ruin. Speaking briefly, the Western world had been reeling under the hammer-blow of an uninspired materialism. People did not care to see anything beyond the

tip of their nose. Let every man take care of himself and devil the hindmost—such was the accepted shibboleth of the time. The struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest and such horrible legacies of the evolution theory completely overpowered the mind of the people. Hatred and jealousy reigned supreme, and there was no amity between man and man, class and class and nation and nation. Even the religion of Christian Europe did not rise up to the mark. It supplied the motive-power for many a political and commercial exploitation, and it was utilised as a tool for some mean and unworthy purposes by the commercial and political magnates. By creating exclusive privileges for its own votaries and claiming for them alone the rights to live under the sun, Christianity revealed before the world, in its naked horror, the ugly trait of the church. Instead of proving a soothing balm for the sore of humanity, religion itself became a great pest. At this juncture the conception of a Universal Religion—the Cult of the Future—was only an imperative necessity. Swamiji rose to the height of expectation before the accredited representatives of the different religions of the world. While different people sang the hallelujah of their respective faiths, he at once delivered the message of a religion which is broad as the sky and deep as the ocean, to which every religion was "only a travelling, a coming-up, of different men and women through various conditions and circumstances to the same goal"—a religion which proclaimed that "the Truth is one though the sages call it by different names." The ideal of Hinduism which he preached there was all-inclusive and wonderfully catholic. "From the highest spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy," to quote his own words "of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all "have a place in the Hindu religion." The people were astounded by the very directness and boldness of Swamiji's message. In truth, the idea of the Parliament of Religions was con-



ceived to prove to the world the innate superiority of Christianity. But the engineer was hoisted by his own petard. The lion was challenged and humbled in his own den. The message of Swami Vivekananda is fraught with a great potentiality for religion and science alike. It is destined to usher in a new world where religion will be scientific and science religious.

While he voiced forth the message of his people, "in the youth and noonday of the West," in the words of Sister Nivedita, "a nation, sleeping in the shadows of the darkened half of earth, on the far side of the Pacific, waited in spirit for the words that would be borne on the dawn that was travelling towards them, to reveal to them the secret of their own greatness and strength." Swami Vivekananda was born in a critical period of the Indian history. Physically, morally and spiritually, we sank to the nadir of degradation. The political slavery for hundreds of years, the utter decadence of our national culture for want of encouragement and the monopoly of religion by the priests and unworthy Pandits contributed to this downfall. To the keen and penetrative intellect of Swamiji this was but too apparent. Besides, he knew that at the root of our national greatness lay the ideal of the Spirit—a firm belief in the immortality of Self, its strength, splendour, glory and might. Our religion is great because it proclaims the glory of Atman, because it enables man to realise the grandest of all truths—I am Brahman—the undying and unborn Self which the sword cannot pierce, fire cannot burn, water cannot soak and air cannot blow up. Before the consciousness of this identity of the individual soul and Paramatman, all fear vanishes, all narrowness disappears, all cowardice and superstition melt away like the mist before the splendour of the blazing sun. He preached incessantly the message of this Atman throughout the length and breadth of his country in order to raise the sleeping leviathan from its agelong torpor. Again and again he exhorted his countrymen not to look to extraneous help for their national or individual salvation, but

to tap the fountain of perennial strength that lay hidden within them. He was convinced that the realisation of this great spiritual ideal would alone enable India to rehabilitate her lost glory.

Swami Vivekananda was a message-bearer by Divine right. He spoke "like one having authority and not as the scribes." He is one of those few souls who visit our planet now and then, appointed, as it were, by some Divine Agency. From his very boyhood, he felt that he had a message to give to the world. His Master at once recognised it in him. Therefore Sri Ramakrishna Deva once remarked: "In my Naren the light of Knowledge shines like the sun. He is indeed the lotus with thousand petals." Though appearing like the sounds of distant footfalls at the beginning, the call of this mission became clear to him ere long on account of some very strange experiences he had to undergo during the early part of his life. His thorough knowledge of Indian scripture, philosophy and history, his training and realisation, his Master's great prophecies regarding his future career, his grasp of the Western philosophy, the constant study of the unique life of his Master in which he found the key to our real national existence, his travels all over his motherland during which he availed himself of ready opportunities of comparing her with what she had been and was—all these prepared him and made him fitter to find out the way for our great national deliverance. Mixing with princes and peasants, saints and scholars, he grasped in its comprehensiveness the vast whole of the Indian nation of which his Master's life and personality had been a brief and intense epitome. As writes Sister Nivedita: "These then,—the Shastra, the Guru and the Motherland,—are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the music of the works of Vivekananda. These are the treasures which it is his to offer."

Thus when the great Swami Vivekananda came out before the world to play his part he was irresistible like a lion. Nothing could daunt him, nothing could swerve him from his path by so much as a jot or tittle. He

delivered his own message before the world. He interpreted the books after his own fashion. He did not follow any beaten track. He took humanity ahead with him by clearing the path with his own strength. Thus it was that he wrote to a friend: "I have a message, and I will give it after my own fashion. I will neither Hinduise my message, nor Christianise, nor make it any 'ise' in the world. I will only *my-ise* it, and that is all." Once in Madras he was assailed with the question, "How could you reconcile the bellicose creeds of monism, qualified monism and dualism, whose differences have been so forcefully accentuated by the great Acharyas like Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva?" He thundered out in response: "Because it was left for me to do it! Because I was born to show this to the world!" Once again he exclaimed in the same strain: "I have realised the Absolute in the superconscious state. I am the proof of the Vedas!" Really in him we find the fulfilment of the scriptural saying: "By knowing Brahman, one verily becomes Brahman."

His message had such supreme force because he always felt the two hands of the Mother holding his own in their grasp. He knew that he was an instrument in the hand of God and that God was working through him. "So long," he wrote to his Gurubhais at the Math from America, "as you have the faith that the Lord is working through me, and will work through me so long as I am in this body, you need have no fear of anything. No evil will befall you!" His only reply to an Englishman who treated him rather ungentlemanly, taking him for an ordinary Sadhu, was, "I am Vivekananda! Who are you?"

If a man's longevity is to be judged by the amount of work he does, then, Swami Vivekananda lived for centuries in that span of ten years that was vouchsafed to him to work in India and abroad. These were years of intense work and incessant struggle. The path before him was not strewn with roses. Like all great souls of his ilk, Swamiji had to pass through many turnpikes and

many doors before he came to occupy the eminence that is his to-day in the world. Malicious campaigns were set on foot against him. But like the snake that raises its hood when smitten, Swamiji also revealed himself strangely during these periods of difficulties and oppositions. Thus he wrote to an American friend in sublime scorn of the world, who brought to his notice a virulent type of machinations organised to belittle him by an interested body of Christian Missionaries :

"What are men? He is with me, the Beloved. He was with me when I was in America, in England, when I was roaming about unknown from place to place in India. What do I care about what they talk—the babies ; they do not know anything better. What ! I, who have realised the Spirit, and the vanity of all earthly nonsense, to be swerved from my path by babies' prattle ! . . . .

"I feel my task is done—at most three or four years more of life is left. I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments. I must see my machine in a strong working order, and then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep without caring what will be next ; and may I be born a' ain and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls,—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.

"He who is the high and the low, the saint and the sinner, the God and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent, and break all other idols.

In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always had been and always will be one, Him worship and break all other idols.

"My time is short. I have got to unbreathe whatever I have to say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates

others. Therefore, my dear M—, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the power behind me is not Vivekananda, but the Lord, and He knows best."

With tremendous success he delivered his message. The world was taken by surprise at its very directness and boldness. But he had to pass through a valley of death before he could attain success in any scheme of his work. Straight he looked at it. He is, indeed, the greatest torch-bearer of the modern age and took humanity ahead with him cheering it always with the cry, "Onward Ho!"

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## JESUS THE CHRIST.

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA.

### III

Hidden from human disturbance in a mountain cave, Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days and forty nights. In the seclusion of his retreat he meditated mounting to higher and higher states of consciousness. The world began to vanish like a dream. Veil after veil of delusion was torn aside till at last his soul freed from all bondage soared into the realm of Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

But Jesus was not forever to bathe in that ocean of Superconscious Bliss. He had been born for a great purpose, to teach humanity. The world burdened with the heavy load of sin cried out for deliverance. That cry pierced Jesus' heart. And from it came flowing a stream of divine love and compassion. Then the gentle voice of recollection breathed softly into his ears, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

With a deep sigh, half conscious, his eyes filled with tears of joy, his face shining with a heavenly light, Jesus stammered in broken accents, "My Lord and my God. Thy will be done."

Even as his soul had risen step by step to the highest realisation, so step by step was the descent to external consciousness.

It was a painful process. Absorbed in God-consciousness Jesus had been lifted above human limitations. Now, gradually, the naked realism of life began to present itself to his vision. He saw spreading before him in moving scenes the torture of his human existence. Three years yet he was to walk on earth—three years of persecution. Only a few would believe in him. The rest would mock and obstruct him. And then the final scene: a howling mob spitting and striking at him, dragging him to Golgotha, nailing him to the cross.

Weak and emaciated from long fasting, these sad forebodings began to agitate his mind, and his human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited him. Then Jesus was tempted.

The coarser temptations of an ordinary man could no longer assail one who from his youth had battled with human passions. But there are subtler temptations met by persons of exceptional spiritual attainment, crucial tests which put to proof the soul's real sincerity. These tests come in the presentation of supernatural powers. These powers when exercised for selfish ends bind the soul to the psychic plane, and put a halt to further spiritual progress.

Jesus, then, shrinking from the terrible mental and physical suffering that awaited him began to question the necessity of undergoing the ordeal. Was he not the Son of God? Could he not shape his own destiny? Could he not accomplish his mission and avoid the torture? An entire life spent in austere self-discipline, abstinence and absolute purity, had given him power over the subtler forces of nature. But he had never tested these powers. Why not try them out? These powers would come most useful to him in his future work. If he could really perform miracles, the people might believe in him. And the absolute assurance that he had power over nature would inspire him with strength and confidence.

As if in answer to these thoughts flashing through his mind, Jesus, in a vision, is suddenly confronted by a bright angel. Satan, personification of man's weaker tendencies, appeared in the disguise of a benevolent spirit to tempt the Saviour.

Is it not always so? Temptations do not approach us in their dark, ugly, coarser nature ; they visit us in their most alluring guise.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we find these simple words, "And when Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights he hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' "

Here we see the objectification of Jesus' own thoughts. Weak and faint from fasting, worn with mental agony, craving for food, Jesus' mind laid itself open to doubt. One doubt makes room for others. First Jesus questioned the necessity for his future suffering ; then came the doubt whether or not he really possessed supernatural powers ; and lastly crept in the doubt regarding his sonship to God. "If thou art the Son of God," the tempter said.

Shut off from the presence of God, Jesus now doubted the genuineness of his previous realisations. Was it true that a voice from heaven had spoken, "This is my beloved Son," or had it only been the voice of his own mind? A cloud of gloom seemed to envelop him.

Jesus felt the need of nourishment. There was no food in the desert. He could not begin his work in such a weak condition. The angel's suggestion seemed timely and reasonable. "Let me see if I can perform the miracle," Jesus thought. "Let me see if through the exertion of my will the stones will be transformed into bread."

It was a critical moment. Jesus fixes his eyes on the angel, seems with his glance to bore through the angel. Then his gaze turns inward. His eyebrows contract, his features become set, his body rigid. He stands like an image graven of stone.

A moment. Then comes the reawakening : a tremor

of the body, a deep sigh. The eyes open. And looking upward Jesus cries out, "Heavenly Father, I am Thy son. Do not forsake me. Not in my own power, but in Thy strength I take refuge. To serve Thee will be my food. Nourish me with Thy presence, give me to drink the waters of Thy grace."

Then rebuking the tempter, he said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by obeying every word of God."

Jesus had stood the test. His finer, real nature had asserted itself. But a subconscious train of questioning thoughts set into motion is not easily stopped. Another vision follows. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down ; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee ; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou clash thy foot against a stone.' "

Yes, even the devil quotes scripture. If we can find no other justification of a weak, sinful act, it is so convenient to quote some text. Scriptures are so elastic, and the mind is so cunning when it acts in self-defence.

As one doubt leads to another doubt, so one victory leads to another victory. Jesus has conquered once. This time there is little struggle. The very suggestion to put God to the test seems low and mean. Instantly Jesus replies, "It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' "

And now comes the last trial. Jesus finds himself placed on the summit of a high mountain. And as he looks down into the valley below, the devil shows him the kingdoms of the world passing in a panoramic view before his sight. Jesus gazed upon a scene of unsurpassed loveliness and prosperity. Then the tempter said, "The power and glory of ruling these kingdoms I can give thee. If thou wilt bow down and worship me, all shall be thine."

This was by far the severest test. There was then



a way to escape from his suffering. By accepting the offer, by a slight compromise of conscience, Jesus could be made king over vast dominions. That was exactly what the Jews expected of their deliverer. And would he not reach their hearts far better if he had worldly power, if he could offer them a prosperous kingdom and independence?

It seemed so plausible, so practical. But no, Jesus' pure heart could not for long be deceived by sophistry. Independence does not make a nation holy; rather, holiness brings independence. By becoming free in the prevailing state of corruption the Jews would only exalt in their newly acquired power, and their sins would increase. The nation must change her heart; then external conditions would improve of themselves. A violent and sudden change would not improve the soul of the race.

And had not God shown him that his mission could be fulfilled only through suffering? Had he not seen God's plan unroll itself before him? Was it not the Father's will that he would suffer, taking upon himself the sins of his race? He must not give in to Satan—his own impatient, stubborn will.

Not by a life of ease and prosperity and worldly power could his great mission be served. His path had to be one of patient suffering, of worldly disappointment, of human ignominy. Through renunciation, by surrendering to God's will, through suffering, great things are accomplished.

When he comes to this decision the struggle is over. Jesus raising himself to his full length, his eyes flashing with indignation, facing the tempter, flings at him the stern command, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!'"

The victory was complete. Divinity had triumphed. Faith, sincere faith had conquered doubt. Satan, defeated, slinks away covered with shame. The vision melts away. Jesus is left master of the situation. He had triumphed over his own mind.

The combat, however, leaves Jesus utterly exhausted. He sinks down to the earth. The pallor of death is upon his face, he is about to swoon.

But the angels of heaven have watched the conflict. Now they descend with song and music, and minister unto the Lord. They bathe his throbbing brow, feed him with the nectar of life. And holding him up in their arms, they comfort him with the message of his Father's love, and the assurance that all heaven triumphs in his victory. And placing flowers at his feet they worship him.

Jesus, refreshed in body and mind, jubilant in spirit, guided by his Father's hand, leaves the mountains for the plains of Galilee. His great heart goes out in sympathy for man. And he begins his work, not to rest till his task is done, and his sacrifice is complete.

We cannot follow Jesus during his three years of public life. We can only hint at the main principles that inspired his own life, and which he presented to those who heard him.

Jesus taught, as all Avatars have taught, that religion should not stop at external observances. It must become an experience of the heart. It must express itself in a holy life of love and service to God and man. By giving the Jews a higher code of ethics and morals he wanted to improve their national character. By placing before them a higher conception of God he wanted to rouse their spiritual nature.

To the Jews God was a far distant stern Judge, before whose tribunal every human being, after death, must appear for judgment. Jesus gave them a nobler ideal. He taught them to look up to God as to a merciful, loving Father, close to every human heart that will accept Him, not a God to be met after death, but an ever-present Spiritual Reality to be known here and now.

To know God, he said, man must be born again: the human consciousness in man must die, that the Spiritual Consciousness may take birth. For "God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in

spirit and in truth." And knowing how difficult it is for the human mind to rise to God-consciousness, he revealed his own divinity, and his power and willingness to help all humanity to reach that state. "I came forth from the Father," he said, "and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father," for, "I and the Father are one." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me hath everlasting life."

The human in Jesus served him only to carry out his mission in this world, to do the will of his Father. The divine in him united him constantly with God. That others might also enjoy this communion with God, he taught the path of devotion, of prayer without ceasing, of renunciation and self-surrender to God.

Let us remember that though Jesus laid aside his body amidst scenes of greatest humiliation, his spirit rose to the Realm of Bliss from which he came, where even now he shines, in his own sphere, as one of the great luminaries, a centre of Light and Love in the infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

And every one who takes refuge in him finds within his own heart a ray of Jesus' luminosity; feels his infinite love ever drawing like a magnet; hears his voice calling, ever calling, from within. "Come unto me, and I will give you life immortal."

For this was Jesus' prayer: That they all may be made perfect in one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

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## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 89.)

अर्थस्य साधने सिद्ध उत्कर्षे रक्षणे व्यये ॥

नाशोपभोग आयासस्त्रासश्चिन्ता भ्रमो नृणाम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. Whether in the acquisition of wealth or, after it has been acquired, in the increase, maintenance, expenditure, enjoyment or loss of it, men undergo exertion,<sup>1</sup> fear, anxiety and delusion.

[1 Exertion &c.—as the case may be.]

स्तेयं हिंसानृतं दम्भः कामः क्रोधः स्मयो मदः ॥

भेदो वैरमविश्वासः संस्पर्धा व्यसनानि च ॥ १८ ॥

एते पञ्चदशानर्था ह्यर्थमूला मता नृणाम् ॥

तस्मादनर्थमर्थाख्यं श्रेयोर्यो दूरतस्त्यजेत् ॥ १९ ॥

18-19. Theft, injury to others, falsehood, ostentation, lust, anger, pride, haughtiness, dissention, enmity, distrust, competition and the three kinds of indulgence—these fifteen evils pertaining to men are considered to be the outcome of wealth. Therefore one desirous of well-being should shun from a distance the evil known as wealth.

[ The evil effects of riches are set forth in verses 18-21.

[1 Three kinds &c.—viz. those relating to sex, wine and gambling.]

मिद्यन्ते भ्रातरो दाराः पितरः सुहृदस्तथा ॥

एकाक्षिग्धाः काकिणिना सद्यः सर्वेऽरयः कृताः ॥ २० ॥

20. Brothers, wives, fathers and friends, who were very near and dear to the heart, are all instantly alienated and turned into foes by even an insignificant sum of money.

अर्थेनाल्पीयसा ह्येते संरब्धा क्षीप्तमन्यवः ॥

त्यजन्त्याशुस्पृधो घ्नन्ति सहसोत्सृज्य सौहृदम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. Even the least amount of money upsets them and inflames their anger, so that they immediately part company, and all at once abandoning cordiality they rival and even kill one another.

लब्ध्वा जन्मामरप्रार्थ्य मानुष्यं तद्विद्वज्जाग्रताम् ॥

तदनादृत्य ये स्वार्थं घ्नन्ति यान्त्यशुर्भा गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. Attaining a human birth which even the gods covet, and being good Brahmanas at that, those who disregard this and mar their own interests,<sup>1</sup> meet with an evil end.

[1 *Interests*—viz. Self-realisation.]

स्वर्गापवर्गयोर्द्वारं प्राप्य लोकमिमं पुमान् ॥

द्विणे कोऽनुषज्जेत मर्त्योऽनर्थस्य धामनि ॥ २३ ॥

23. What mortal man would, after attaining this body which is the gateway to heaven and liberation, get attached to money which is the abode of evil?

देवर्षिपितृभूतानि ज्ञातीन्वन्धूंश्च भागिनः ॥

असंविभज्य चात्मानं यक्षवित्तः पतत्यधः ॥ २४ ॥

24. The miser who hoards money like the proverbial Yaksha,<sup>1</sup> without sharing it with the gods,<sup>2</sup> the Rishis, the manes, lower animals, relatives,<sup>3</sup> friends and other legitimate shares in it as well as himself, goes to degradation.

[1 *Yaksha*—a species of superhuman beings possessing immense wealth which they simply keep hidden without using it for themselves or others.

2 *Gods &c.*—The reference is to the *Panchayajna* or the fivefold sacrifice which every householder is required to perform.

3 *Relatives &c.*—coming under the head of 'man' in the list.]

व्यर्थयाऽर्थेहया वित्तं प्रमत्तस्य वयो बलम् ॥

कुशला येन सिध्यन्ति जरठः किं नु साधये ॥ २५ ॥

25. Oh, I was deluded by a fruitless search for wealth which has now gone, along with my age and

strength. Well, what could a decrepit man like me achieve through that which helps men of discrimination alone to attain the goal?

कस्मात्संक्लिश्यते विद्वान्व्यर्थयाऽर्थेहयाऽसकृत् ॥

कस्यचिन्मायया नूनं लोकोऽयं सुविमोहितः ॥ २६ ॥

26. Why are even learned men tormented time and again by the vain quest for wealth? Surely this world is utterly deluded by Somebody's inscrutable Power.<sup>1</sup>

किं धनेर्धनदैर्वा किं कामैर्वा कामदेरुत ॥

मृत्युना ग्रस्यमानस्य कर्मभिर्वीतजन्मदेः ॥ २७ ॥

27. What can a man in the jaws of death want with wealth or the bestower of wealth, with desires or those who fulfil those desires, or with works<sup>1</sup> which but lead to rebirth?

[<sup>1</sup> Works—such as the *Agnihotra* which being done with selfish motives never confer liberation.]

नूनं मे भगवांस्तुष्टः सर्वदेवमयो हरिः ॥

येन नीतो दशामेतां निर्वेदश्चात्मनः प्लवः ॥ २८ ॥

28. Surely the Lord Hari, who is the embodiment of all the gods, is pleased with me, for He has brought me to such a crisis, in which I have got that world-weariness which is a raft<sup>1</sup> for the struggling soul.

[<sup>1</sup> Raft—to cross the ocean of transmigration.]

सोऽहं कालावशेषेण शोषयिष्येऽङ्गमात्मनः ॥

अप्रमत्तोऽखिलस्वार्थे यदि स्यात्सिद्ध आत्मनि ॥ २९ ॥

29. So during the remainder of my life—if at all there is any left—I shall mortify the body, satisfied with the Self alone and attending to all that conduces to well-being.

तत्र मामनुमोदेरन्देवास्त्रिभुवनेश्वराः ॥

मुहूर्तेन ब्रह्मलोकं खट्वाङ्गः समसाधयत् ॥ ३० ॥

30. May the gods who rule the three worlds bless me in this! Well, Khattānga<sup>1</sup> attained to the sphere of the Lord in twenty-four minutes.

[1 *Khattāṅga*—was a king who coming to know through the kindness of the gods that only 24 minutes of his life was left, devoted himself whole-heartedly to the meditation of God and in that short time attained realisation.]

*(To be continued.)*

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION.

The first Convention of the Ramakrishna Order will be held at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, the headquarters of the Order, from the 1st to the 7th of April, 1926. All the branch centres as well as the lay members of the Mission have been invited to attend the session. The object of this momentous gathering is to discuss the ideals of the Order and to devise means for translating them into practice by a hearty co-operation among the different centres. In connection with this there will be three public meetings—two of them devoted to religious lectures by distinguished Swamis as well as sympathisers of the Order and the third to a lecture on Hygiene by a Calcutta specialist, illustrated by bioscope. It is hoped the functions will be a great success. Friends of the Order can help in the work of the Convention by contributing to its funds. Particulars may be had on application to the Secretary of the Convention, P. O. Belur, Dt. Howrah.

### SWAMI PARAMANANDA IN INDIA.

We accord our hearty welcome to Swami Paramananda who has just returned to India after his long sojourn in the United States of America for a period of nearly fifteen years. As the readers of the Prabuddha Bharata are aware, he has been successfully preaching the Gospel of Vedanta to the citizens of America from his centres at Boston and La Crescenta in California since the year 1906 when he first went to the West. He is not only an impressive speaker, but also a fine poet, having already published several dainty volumes which have been well appreciated by the Western public. The Swami will stay in his

mother-country for a few months, in the course of which he wishes to visit some of the centres of the Ramakrishna Order. The Ananda Ashrama which he has recently started at La Crescenta is growing apace, and he will return there in the ensuing summer, probably accompanied by one or two other Swamis to help him in his work. Swami Paramananda looks extremely youthful for his age, and is very kind and genial in his dealings with the public.

#### THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

The sixty-fourth birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda that fell in the month of January, 1926, was celebrated with due pomp and solemnity in India, Burma and Ceylon, and some countries of the West. Here in India his birthday has become a national festival and found a place in the national calendar, and it was observed throughout the length and breadth of the country as a day of consecration with Puja, Homa, feeding of the poor and a discussion of his life and teachings. Abroad, specially in the Federated Malay States, Persia and the United States of America, his followers and admirers observed the day with great fervour and enthusiasm.

It is indeed a happy sign of the times that the number of the admirers of the Swami is increasing day by day, and we are getting reports of his birthday celebration from many parts, which, we are sorry to say, we cannot publish in our paper for want of space. One thing that we want to emphasise here is that let us not, in our admiration for the man, forget the principles that he embodied in life. Swami Vivekananda was the personification of religious toleration, soul-force and service of humanity. Let us all remember that and try to imitate him when we celebrate his birthday.

#### THE ANTI-MALARIA CONFERENCE AT THE BELUR MATH.

A conference of all the Anti-Malaria Societies in Howrah and Hooghly districts was held at the Rama-



krishna Math, Belur, Howrah on Sunday, 7th February, at 1-30 p.m. About 300 delegates representing 80 societies attended the conference. Besides several visitors from Calcutta, Belur and other places, the representatives of the Central Anti-Malaria Society and the Health Officers of Howrah and Hooghly, the following gentlemen were present on invitation: Sir K. C. Bose, K.T. ; Dr. Bepin Behari Ghose of Calcutta ; Mr. G. S. Dutt, I.C.S.; Major J. C. De, I.M.S., Police Surgeon, Calcutta ; Ray A. C. Banerjee Bahadur, M.A., M.L.C. ; Mr. N. N. Bose, Bar-at-Law of Bengal Scouts ; Ray Dr. G. C. Chatterjee Bahadur ; and Mr. A. M. Watson, Editor, 'Statesman.'

The Belur Boy Scouts with their picturesque dress made a guard of honour for the delegates and visitors arriving at the conference. Miss J. MacLeod presided over the deliberations and Brahmachari Bhairav Chaitanya of the Belur Math took an active part in the convening of the conference and did much to make it a success. The following resolutions were passed at the conference :

1. How the Boy Scouts Movement could be utilised for carrying on anti-malaria work in villages.

2. To request the Government to form a Provincial Village Improvement Board consisting of all the high Officials of the different departments of the Government to solve all the difficulties of the Anti-Malaria Societies and villages.

3. To form Boards on a co-operative basis consisting of representatives of all the Anti-Malaria Societies concerned for excavating the dead rivers, the Saraswati and the Kana-Damodar, by issuing shares and taking loan from the Government which will be repaid in instalments by profits from irrigation and fishery rights.

Srijut Tarak Nath Mukherjee, M.L.C., Vice-Chairman, District Board, Howrah, has been elected President, and Ray A. C. Dutt Bahadur, Retired District Magistrate, has been elected Vice-President of the provincial committee formed.

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### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPATH, DEOGHAR.

The Griha-Pravesh ceremony of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, a residential school for boys at Deoghar, Bihar, took place on the morning of the 18th January last.

Srimat Swami Shivananda Maharaj, President, Swami Shankarananda, Swami Dhirananda and several other Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Mission graced the occasion by their presence. Many guardians of the Vidyapith boys, together with a number of other guests and a big representative gathering from the local public, made the function a really imposing one.

The sublimity of the occasion was heightened when Srimat Swami Shivananda Maharaj carried with due reverence the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna to the new buildings and performed Puja and Aratrik in the midst of the blowing of conches, singing of hymns and religious songs. The guests then attended the worship of Goddess Saraswati, which was being performed in the neighbouring room. At about 2 p.m. all invited, monks, guests and also poor labourers of the locality, were sumptuously entertained with Prasad.

The annual prize distribution ceremony of the institution was held on the following day at 3 p.m. After some beautiful recitations by the boys, Srimat Swami Shivananda Maharaj distributed the prizes, and the meeting was concluded by short addresses to the boys, given by His Holiness and Swami Nirvedananda.

The delight and enthusiasm of all present made the function a complete success.

### THE COMING KUMBHA MELA.

We beg to announce to the public that the Purna Kumbha Mela comes off at Hardwar in 1927, after a lapse of twelve years. Considering the improvement and expansion of roads and railways and other available conveyances, we expect that a far larger number of pilgrims will congregate at Hardwar than at the past Kumbha Mela celebrations.

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama at Kankhal, Hardwar, will take up the work of alleviating the sufferings of the sick, helpless pilgrims in all possible ways on the occasion. As pre-arrangement is imperatively necessary to meet the exigencies of the situation properly and successfully, the Sevashrama is preparing itself beforehand and is appealing to the generous public for funds.

The work of the Sevashrama in this line will comprise the following items:—(i) *Permanent Hospital Relief Section*. It will have 1 doctor, 2 compounders, 1 dresser and several nurses, and they will be in charge of the Permanent Hospital, except the Cholera Section. (ii) *Temporary Relief Section*. It will have 1 doctor, 1 compounder and 2 nurses, and they will go round every day from camp to camp to find out patients, who are unable to come to the Sevashrama, and treat them there. They will also inform the Headquarters, if they find any case requiring removal to the Hospital. (iii) *Special Cholera Relief Section*. This department will consist of several groups of volunteers, and they will attend to the nursing of cholera patients in a Special Ward, bring in patients on Ambulance cars, burn dead bodies and disinfect the affected areas. (iv) *Kitchen Section*. The workers of this Section will take charge of the Kitchen and Stores and prepare food for the patients, workers and guests.

To carry out this plan successfully the Sevashrama will have to requisition the services of several trained workers and doctors from outside. Moreover, medicines, diets and other necessities will be needed specially for that occasion. All these will involve a great expense. We hope that the generous public will come forward and send in their contributions in time, so that the Sevashrama may work out its noble scheme of service. Contributions may be sent to the following addresses:—(i) Swami Kalyanananda, Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar, U. P. (ii) Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherjee's Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. (iii) President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah, Bengal.

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



प्राप्य बरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI.

APRIL, 1926.

No. 4.

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## THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER : WHAT IT STANDS FOR.\*

CHILDREN OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

Please allow me to express my sincere felicitations at your congregating together in this Convention of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission held for the first time in the annals of the Ramakrishna Order. This Convention, I am confident, will afford you a unique opportunity of comparing notes with one another regarding the various works carried on by the different centres which you have met here to represent and also of hearing from the few surviving disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna about the ideas and ideals of religion as expressed in and through the life of our Master, which will undoubtedly go a great way towards increasing the necessary solidarity of this organisation.

Had Swamiji been alive to-day, how warmly would

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\* Presidential Address of Srimat Swami Shivananda, delivered at the First Convention of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission on 1st April, 1926, at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur. A short report of the proceedings will appear in our next issue.—Ed. P.B.

he have greeted you all and showered his blessings on this gathering for bringing its deliberations to a successful end! The vision of another great soul who was regarded by the Master as next to Swami Vivekananda in his capacity for realising religious ideals comes irresistibly before our mind to-day. Indeed, if Swamiji was loved and charished by the Master as the instrument by which to proclaim to the world his great mission in the realm of religion—Swami Brahmananda was no less regarded by him as the person to fill an important and very responsible place in the scheme of his religious organisation. In fact, under the paternal care of the Raja Maharaj, the first President of the Ramakrishna Mission, the organisation that had but existed as a seed in the monastery of Baranagore assumed its present form of a mighty plant. Although we sadly miss them and some other brother disciples of ours, as Swami Premananda, Swami Ramakrishnananda and others, who had no mean share in contributing to the growth of this organisation, I invoke the benedictions of them all as well as that of our Master on this auspicious occasion.

I do not wish to give you here any detailed scheme for the furtherance of the objects of this Convention. I shall be satisfied with telling you a few words in general out of my personal experience and I shall feel happy if I be of any service to you in bringing the deliberations to a successful issue.

Three decades ago when the present activities of the Ramakrishna Order with its various ramifications all over the country and abroad were in the womb of futurity, when people knew Swami Vivekananda as but a preacher of Hinduism who upheld the cause of our Sanatana Dharma in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the great Swami with the keen vision of a Prophet clearly foresaw the part that the teachings of his Master would play in shaping the destiny of humanity at large which had been lying then in the melting-pot of a great transition. The admonition of his Master to forego the selfish enjoyment of Samadhi and dedicate his life to the wel-

fare of the many, seeing Him alone immanent in the Universe, haunted him day and night ever since that memorable day when Sri Ramakrishna in a mood of inward absorption handed over to his illustrious disciple the precious fruits of his own realisations reaped in the course of the crowded period of his Sadhana and made him the happy conduit for the flow of the elixir of spirituality that the world needed at a great psychological period of its history.

After the passing away of the Master, Swamiji formulated a unique scheme of thought to shape the future of his countrymen for the revivification of the world culture—a scheme which was the outcome of some of his strange personal experiences. The chief formative influences that went to determine his vision may be classified under the following heads: his Master's great prophecies regarding him; his own training and realisations; his knowledge of Western philosophy, history and Sanskrit scriptures; the constant study of the divine life of his Guru before him in which he found the key to life and the verification of the Shastras; his travels all over his motherland in the course of which he availed himself of the opportunities of comparing her as she then was with what she had been, of studying the life and thought of the people, their needs and possibilities and the diversities of their customs and faiths. Mixing with princes and peasants, with saints and scholars, he grasped in its comprehensiveness that vast whole of which his Master's life and personality was but an intense epitome. These then—the Shastras, the Guru and the Motherland—are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the symphony of Swamiji's life and works. These were the treasures which he wanted to offer to the world at large.

The above-mentioned experiences furnished him with the clue to the prevalent disruptive world-forces which necessitated the advent of a Prophet. The first thing that arrested his thought was the prevailing bigotry among the different religions of the world and a very parochial

conception regarding the ideal of religion itself. The different creeds which were thought of by the ancient seers as but different paths for the realisation of one and the same Truth, maintained a bellicose attitude towards one another. Like frogs in the well, the followers of a particular sect refused to see anything beyond the tip of their nose. And secondly, religion working on a narrow basis subjected itself to self-condemnation by ostracising the various schemes of life from its scope. Religion was conceived as having nothing to do with the actualities of our everyday life and therefore was left aside as an exclusive ideal to be pursued by the recluse in the forest or by men outside the pale of society. The highest maxim of Vedanta was considered as utterly incompatible with work. A permanent cleavage was made between work and worship, renunciation and service—an unfortunate factor which contributed most to our national degeneration. At this juncture the world sorely needed a man who would formulate a religion that would be scientific and a science that would be religious.

Swami Vivekananda found in his Master such a man. Sri Ramakrishna stood at that point of equilibrium in which the great conflicts of life neutralise one another. In him was found a wonderful *rapprochement* of the various apparently jarring creeds. First of all, by actual realisation he demonstrated the practical utility of the three main systems of Indian philosophic thought—monism, qualified monism and dualism—to reach the ideal which is beyond any particular philosophical doctrine. Again, reaching the same goal by following some of the accepted paths, *viz.*, Sanatana Dharma, Islam and Christianity, he demonstrated the efficacy of these different religions conceived to suit different temperaments. In him was revived once more the long forgotten ideal of the Vedas, एकं सद्भिर्वा बहुधा वदन्ति, "The Truth is one, but sages call it by different names." And lastly, in his life was wonderfully noticed a harmonious reconciliation between such apparently incompatible ingredients as Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and

Yoga. A man who held the highest Samadhi in the palm of his hand, also melted into tears at the mere mention of the name of God. He who had realised Truth by following the intricacies of the Yoga system was also found undergoing the pain of slow crucifixion in the midst of tremendous activities for distributing the fruits of his own realisations among fit recipients. This all-sided man appealed irresistibly to the mind of his disciple, who clearly saw that the future world, reborn and rejuvenated, must bear the stamp of his Guru's genius.

The Buddhistic organisation of ancient India as well as the discipline and organised effort of the modern progressive West, where also he had travelled a great deal, might have suggested to the mind of Swamiji the idea of an institution that would, under proper discipline, make a practical application of the teachings of his Master. Swami Vivekananda, a practical idealist that he was, soon after his return from the West, formulated the idea—at once original and bold—of a Math which would be the fittest mirror wherein future generations would find a true reflex of the life and thought of Sri Ramakrishna.

As the very basis of the Math we find the following words of the Swamiji. "This Math is established," said he, "for the attainment of one's own liberation as well as to get equipped for the amelioration of the world in all possible ways by following the path laid down by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva. Another Math working on this line will be established for women as well." These pregnant words of the Swami Vivekananda form the corner-stone, as it were, of the Math established by him. A proper understanding of these words, which mean much more than what appears on the surface, will supply the pivot of the entire organisation controlled and managed by the members of the Ramakrishna Order.

At the very outset we find that he has linked up into a single purpose two apparently diverse ideals, *viz.*, one's own liberation and service for the welfare of the world.



Through this Math he has sought to weld together the ideals of renunciation and service, work and worship, which, as generally people believe, cannot possibly combine without proving detrimental to each other. According to his ideal, the attainment of personal liberation need not necessarily contradict the dedication of life to the service of humanity, nor should the latter in its highest aspect be thought of as apart from the activities of the man who is eager to pierce through the mist that has covered the effulgent Truth lying within his own self. If the highest illumination aims at nothing short of effacing all distinctions between the individual soul and the universal Soul, and if its ideal be to establish a total identity of one's own self with Brahman existing everywhere, then it naturally follows that the highest spiritual experience of the aspirant cannot but lead him to a state of exalted self-dedication to the welfare of all. He makes the last divine sacrifice by embracing the universe after transcending its limitations which are the outcome of ignorance. Swamiji wanted to make the members of his Math the most willing instruments in the hand of God for the fruition of his work, the fulfilment of which task must confer upon them the felicity of the highest spiritual illumination. Sri Ramakrishna told us again and again that to enjoy a sweet mango all by oneself was a much lower ideal than to share it with others.

Again, looking from an ordinary standpoint we find Swamiji, the great Acharya that he was, giving us the ideal of an organisation wherefrom its members will get the greatest facilities of an integral realisation, rich and full in its conception and attainment. The aspirant will have to combine in his Sadhana elements of the four accepted paths—Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga, laying greater stress on a particular process according to his predominant temperament. Not a single one of these items must be left out, otherwise the result will be a little less than complete. Thus we shall presently see among the ways prescribed for the members of the Math a wonderful synthesis of meditation, worship, study and work.

That the Math must not limit itself within a narrow precinct but consecrate itself to a wider scope of activities, is clearly evidenced from the following words of Swamiji. "Such Maths we must establish," says he, "all over the world. Some countries stand in need of spirituality only, whereas others are in need of a few wordly amenities. We must lead nations and individuals to the realm of spirituality through paths suited to them by fulfilling the respective wants that such nations and individuals may be most suffering from." "The first and foremost necessity in India," Swamiji goes on, "is the propagation of education and religious ideas among the lower classes. It is impossible for hungry men to become spiritual unless food is provided for them. Therefore above all our paramount duty is to show them new ways of food supply."

These clear words unmistakably show what Swamiji conceived to be one of the principal items in the spiritual exercises of the inmates of his Math. So far as the Indian work was concerned, the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna acknowledging Swamiji as the expounder of his life and teachings must accept a programme of activities which have hitherto been considered as belonging to the secular domain and therefore left outside the scheme of life of those who wanted to attain the highest goal of existence here and now. It is not work, the Gita and other Shastras say, that demeans or elevates a man, but it is his attitude towards work that is the real determining factor. It stands to reason also that if with love and devotion a Sadhaka can discover Divinity in mere images, he can certainly with much more ease realise God through the worship of Man—surely a higher creation than the inanimate objects—if the worship be performed there with the same amount of sincerity, devotion and love. Without doubt man is the highest symbol of God and his worship is the highest form of worship on earth.

This ideal of Sadhana conceived by Swamiji further developed into a practical suggestion which he made re-

garding the plan of work of the Math. "This, then, is our aim," he said, "that this Math will have to be slowly developed into a finished university, where the culture of philosophy and religion must proceed along with a fully equipped Technical Institute. This is our primary duty. Other branches of study will be added later on to its curriculum." A very bold conception indeed! Nowhere in it is to be found the slightest trace of a compromise with the stereotyped ancient ideal of leaving out works from the conception of an ideal religion. This is the special significance of the message of Swamiji to his countrymen. In order to save the Math from the inevitable calamity that had befallen similar institutions in olden times, Swamiji warned its guardians to see that it must not lapse into a mere Thakurbadi or a chapel where superficial ceremonies take the place of the spirit of the thing—बाबाजीद्वारा ठाकुरबाड़ी, to quote his own words. "Such a chapel," said he, "may prove beneficial to a few or satisfy the passing curiosity of a handful, but this Math will prove of inestimable value to the whole world." This, then, is the basic conception of the Math founded by Swami Vivekananda.

A Math based on such a lofty ideal reflecting the life of Sri Ramakrishna, its guardian angel, cannot be anything but catholicity itself. Humanity has never before seen another life like that of Sri Ramakrishna synthesising the highest ideals of knowledge, devotion, work and Yoga. Those only who mould their lives after the perfect ideal of Sri Ramakrishna's character can be truly said to represent the ideas of the Math. Therefore Swamiji enjoined that the special aim of this Math would be the formation of character by combining the above-mentioned four paths, and that the spiritual exercises that would bring about such a synthesis would alone be accepted as the Sadhana of this Math. "Therefore," he said emphatically, "everyone must bear in mind that a man who shows the slightest deficiency in any one of the above-mentioned ways has not been properly cast in the mould of Sri Ramakrishna's life. He who consecrates himself

to the service of others does a nobler work than he who tries to work out his own liberation." This is really the special feature of this Math. Before the advent of Sri Ramakrishna it was thought perfectly natural, nay inevitable, that one system of religious thought alone could flourish in a Math. But realising the three main systems of Indian philosophical thought as but different readings of the Absolute, Sri Ramakrishna made it possible to establish a Math on the bedrock of transcendental experience wherefrom equal utility of all these systems of philosophy can be boldly proclaimed as leading to the realisation of the highest Impersonal Truth. To save his Math from the contingency of some unavoidable evil results, Swamiji laid equal emphasis on the culture of the head, heart and hands. He knew that mere work uninspired by religion and unaccompanied by meditation, discrimination and other spiritual exercises, degenerates into a kind of pure social service activity. Such mechanical work, not attuned to a higher conception of life, piles bondage upon bondage. Hands can work for the desired end when the vision is clarified and the heart finds facilities for its full expression. Again, simple discrimination or study of the scriptures ends in mere intellectual gymnastics, dry and insipid, if it does not express its conclusions in terms of the actualities of life. Similarly, devotion degenerates into meaningless and often dangerous sentimentalism if it dissociates itself from discrimination and work. To know Truth, to feel its presence in the innermost recesses of one's heart and to realise its expression all around—these are but three aspects of the same highest divine realisation. His ideal monk was one who would be now absorbed in meditation and the next moment be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras. The same monk again would with equal zeal cultivate the field and sell the produce of it in the market, carrying it on his own head.

The following is the clear instruction of the Swamiji regarding the programme of work of the Math:—

"Want of culture brings about the degeneration of

a religious sect. Therefore culture of knowledge should be practised in the Math without intermission. Luxury crushes the Math when its members forget the ideals of renunciation and austerity. Therefore these ideas must be always kept bright in the organisation. Dissemination of ideas adds to the vigour and vitality of an organisation. Therefore this Math must never stop its preaching activities.

"In a narrow society religion is generally seen to possess a certain depth and intensity like that of a small rivulet. Similarly, it is noticed that the depth and intensity diminish in proportion as the ideas of liberality creep into it. But the strangest thing is that transcending all such historical precedents, ideas broader than the sky itself and deeper than the ocean found a wonderful reconciliation in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. It is thus proved to the hilt that the greatest catholicity and the greatest extensity can exist side by side with the utmost intensity in an individual, and a society can also be established on such a basis, because society is but an aggregate of individuals." Of course a man of wide and catholic outlook of Sri Ramakrishna's stamp cannot be met with every now and then. But such a want can be compensated and the integrity and cohesion of the Math kept intact, if its different members holding Sri Ramakrishna as their ideal and following different paths of Sadhana according to their temperaments are accepted as integral parts of the institution and equal facilities afforded to all for individual growth and expression. Sri Ramakrishna may not exist any more in his physical body, but so long as this catholicity be kept untarnished the Math will certainly feel his presence. Swamiji also declared, "This Math represents the physical body of Sri Ramakrishna. He is always present in this institution. The injunction of the whole Math is the injunction of Sri Ramakrishna. One who worships it, worships him as well. And one who disregards it, disregards our Master."

An institution of such a catholic outlook may contain, to all appearances, elements of disintegration—a

fact to which Swamiji was very keenly alive. Again, all outward dissensions are preceded and accentuated by mental disruptions. Therefore Swamiji laid down unity of purpose as the greatest force for maintaining the integrity of the institution. All members of the Math must repeatedly study and think on this conception of the Swamiji regarding the Math and try to translate it into practice in their individual life. "Mutual love, obedience to the authorities, forbearance and an unalloyed purity can alone maintain unity and an *esprit de corps* among the members of the Math"—and save them from the calamity of disintegration. Fame is the last infirmity of noble minds and it seduces even the noblest soul from his path of duty. Hankering for fame causes jealousy which in the end spells ruin to the organisation. "Sri Ramakrishna never cared for name and fame. We are his followers and servants. So we must always set aside all allurements of name and fame. Our ideal in life is to carry out his commands, leading pure lives ourselves and teaching others to do so." A great responsibility rests on our shoulders. We must know that Sri Ramakrishna sits on the crest of the wave that has already gone forth to raise humanity from its present state of depression—and it is through the members of the Math that people will judge of Sri Ramakrishna. Our work will proclaim his glory. We are his representatives wherever we may go or live. People will see in the members of this Math a reflection of Sri Ramakrishna. Consciousness of such responsibility cannot but bring about a unity of purpose among the different members of the Math.

A spirit of obedience on the part of the workers and that of willing service on the part of the leaders must pervade the entire atmosphere of the Math. The success of an organisation depends a great deal upon the capacity of its leader. The faculty of organisation is entirely absent in our nature. This has become our peculiar national trait. But the secret of success lies in the absence of jealousy. The leader must be always ready to concede to the opinion of his brother workers and try always to

conciliate. "Don't try to be a ruler," Swamiji said addressing the leaders. "He is the best ruler who can serve well. Never attempt to guide others or rule others or, as the Americans say, boss others. Be the servant of all. Nobody will come to help you, if you assume the role of a great leader ; kill self first if you want to succeed. The great secret of success is never to figure out big plans at first, but begin slowly, feel the ground and proceed up and up." Again, "you must go and seize the crocodile first if you are told to do so and then argue." This should be the attitude of every worker. With great agony Swamiji said, "If there is any crying sin in India at this time it is our slavery. Every one wants to command and no one wants to obey. This is owing to the absence of that wonderful Brahmacharya system of yore. First learn to obey. Always first learn to be a servant and then you will be a fit master. The worker must carry out the orders of his superior, leaving aside even the consideration of his life. Fear is at the root of all misery. It is the greatest sin. Therefore we must overcome it altogether. The first and foremost cause that separates a brother from his brother is to speak ill of one another behind his back. The members of this Math must studiously avoid it. If a member must say anything against his brother, it must be confided to him alone. Not one among the followers of Sri Ramakrishna is bad. Had he been so he could not find entrance into the Order. Every member of the Math must deeply ponder over it before judging others." These are some of the very practical suggestions which Swamiji has given for bringing about the spirit of co-operation and co-ordination among the different members and different centres of the Belur Math. His warning to the recalcitrant member still rings clear in our ears. "To make a great future India," Swamiji said, "the whole secret lies in organisation, accumulation of power, co-ordination of wills. Organisation alone is the primary means for all progress and the only way for the conservation of energy. The curse of the entire organisation must fall on his head

who would try to bring about its disruption and disintegration by word, thought and action. Nothing but ruin awaits him in this world or in that to come."

The present division of the activities of the Ramakrishna Order into those of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math, which may give rise to a little confusion, is a purely technical one. It is generally believed that the Math is, as it were, a place for meditation and study alone, whereas philanthropic works have been relegated to the scope of the Mission proper. Though in practice it has become so in some cases, it is necessary to clear up any confusion that may exist in this respect. From what I have said before you will clearly understand that the Math conceived by Swamiji includes everything—work as well as worship, social service as well as meditation and study. As we have seen before, he wanted to incorporate with the Belur Math a full-fledged university, including in its curriculum the study of religion and philosophy as well as that of technology. In his time no necessity was felt for making a formal separation of the Order into the Math and the Mission. To give effect to his ideals, he established an Association on the 1st May, 1897 to unite the monastic and lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Deva in a common organised effort for the service of humanity. As the Association, which had been named the Ramakrishna Mission, thrived and its activities widened, it was given, in order to remove some purely technical difficulties, a legal status by registering it in 1909 under Act XXI of 1860 of the Governor General of India. Thenceforth on legal grounds alone a formal distinction has been made between the Math and the Mission. Really speaking, for the convenience of the public a part of the Math itself has been given, as it were, the appellation of the Ramakrishna Mission. All the members of the Ramakrishna Order, whatever may be their sphere of work for the time being, belong in essence to the Ramakrishna Math conceived by the Swamiji. Any attempt to make a cleavage between the existing Math and Mission works is distinctly against the



ideal of Swamiji and therefore stands self-condemned. Any attempt to find a distinction between the ideals of the Math and the Mission is unholy and dangerous. Be good yourself and help others to be so—was the injunction of Swamiji to every member of the Math. And he wanted to give effect to this by a combination of the four accepted paths of Sadhana, allowing, as we have said before, fuller expression to a particular path according to the temperament of the aspirant. Hence there is no room for a clash of ideals. To try to find a distinction between the ideals of the Math and the Mission is like trying to distinguish between two facets of the same coin. Therefore those who are engaged in philanthropic works should be considered as important members of the Order as those who have devoted themselves to meditation alone in a cave of the Himalayas, provided all of them acknowledge their allegiance to the ideals of Swamiji. Those who retire from the arena of activity for a time and lead exclusively a life of meditation and study with a view to equip themselves more fully for the work, are regarded as invaluable assets for the growth and vitality of the organisation. The Math is a picturesque bouquet containing the flowers of Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma whose variegated colours and sweet aroma contribute to its richness and beauty.

Well, friends, I have told you what I had got to say. From my little experience I tell you, children of Sri Ramakrishna, that our organisation lasts as long as the spirit of God pervades its atmosphere. Love, catholicity, purity and selflessness are the corner-stones of our organisation. No man-made laws can save it from ruin when selfishness eats into its vitals. If you all try to become perfect—keeping intact your allegiance to this Math which gives you every kind of facility for reaching that perfection, you will add a leaf to the life of the organisation. Swamiji shed his blood for the Math. His spirit is still hovering over us. This Math is the visible body of Sri Ramakrishna. All those that have gone before us are still with us in spirit to help us in all possible ways. We must unfurl

all sails so that we may take advantage of the divine wind that is ever blowing to take us to the destined goal.

Religion is the great mission of India. This is the only gift that we can bestow on the world. From time immemorial religious ideas flowing from this land have been contributing their quota to shape the civilisations of the world. We are still alive in spite of the many vicissitudes that have befallen this unfortunate race during the last ten centuries, only because religion forms the backbone of our life. With us God is the central pillar round which move all other schemes of life individual or collective. True greatness is estimated here in the scales of spirituality. In pursuance of the great law enunciated in the Gita the Lord has again incarnated Himself in this age as Sri Ramakrishna to revive the lost ideals of religion. Incarnations and Prophets came before him in numbers to show us light in the midst of darkness, to elevate us from national depression. But the darkness of former ages that necessitated the advent of Prophets, compared with the darkness that has overwhelmed us at present, may be said to be light itself. The former national depressions compared with our present one look like mere mud-puddles. Therefore to extricate us and to disentangle the world from the tentacles of dark material forces, God has, through His infinite grace, incarnated Himself again in the fullest degree. "Through thousands of years' chiselling and modelling, the lives of the great prophets of yore come down to us ; and yet in my opinion, not one stands so high in brilliance as that life which I saw with my own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have learnt everything. Before this great wave of spirituality there have been whirlpools of lesser manifestations all over society. It came, at first unknown, unperceived and unthought of, assuming proportions, swallowing, as it were, and assimilating all the other little whirlpools, becoming immense, till it assumed the shape of a tidal wave falling upon society with a power that none can resist." That great personality, the greatest that the world has ever seen, is behind you. Our

forefathers performed great deeds, you must do greater deeds still. Each one of us will have to believe that everyone else in the world has done his work, and the only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect, has to be done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves.

In old Buddhistic monasteries a sincere effort was made to do good to the world through organised efforts. And they succeeded a great deal in their object. Since the record of history, Buddhistic monks, through their organisations, have perhaps put the greatest lever for humanity's good. If the unknown history of some of the principal existing religions and systems of philosophy be ever written, the world will know how much these intrepid monks contributed to their growth and development. So long as those monasteries kept intact the pristine ideals of purity and renunciation, they were irresistible wherever they went. But when that spirit waned the religion of Buddha showed signs of decadence. This is a great historical lesson we are to learn. In the subsequent history of India we find occasionally an individual rising to the highest pinnacle of perfection, but he did not care much for people around him. Undoubtedly he realised a great ideal. But the ideal itself for want of a suitable medium of expression died of inanition in the course of a generation or two. This is another great lesson. Again, we find during the last few centuries the growth and development of Maths and Ashrams in the country in a very large number. Though they might have benefited a comparatively small number of people who gave up the world, by providing them with facilities for their individual spiritual growth, they could not be of much help to society at large, because they omitted from their scheme of spiritual exercises a spirit of service for humanity. This is the third lesson of history. Swamiji took all these facts into consideration before setting forth the ideal of his Math. Dedication of our life to the attainment of our own liberation as well as to the amelioration of the world at large—आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च—is what he has

chosen for us—the ideal of all ideals. I have my fullest confidence in you all who have been earnestly endeavouring to realise this lofty ideal in life. You do not hesitate to brush aside any personal considerations, however strong, for the realisation of this ideal—and I clearly find Sri Ramakrishna, our Light and Guide, working from behind you and through you. His benign hands are at the back of all of your activities. It is his grace alone that has enabled your works to be crowned with success within such a short period of time. So long as you have faith in him, so long as you consider yourselves as humble instruments in his hands, no power on earth however great, can shake you from your position by so much as a jot or tittle. Putting your faith in our Lord everyone of you can say, "Let me stand where I am and I shall move the world." I exhort you with all the earnestness at my command not to be disturbed or discouraged by momentary failures. Failures are but the stepping-stones to success. Viewing success and failure alike, work on with unwavering faith in him and victory will be yours at the end. I only pray that your surrender may be complete. Be like the arrow that darts from the bow. Be like the hammer that falls on the anvil. Be like the sword that pierces its object. The arrow does not murmur if it misses the target. The hammer does not fret if it falls on a wrong place. And the sword does not lament if it is broken in the hands of its wielder. Yet there is a joy in being made, used and broken ; and an equal joy in being finally set aside.

I invoke the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna on you all so that he may give you strength and courage to realise Truth in this very life.

Let the atmosphere of this Convention vibrate with a spirit of love and benediction. Let us, in conclusion, say with the great Indian sages and echo the voice of the Vedas :

मधु वाता ऋतायते ॥ मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः ॥ माध्वीनः सत्वोषधीः ॥  
मधु नक्त्युतोषसो ॥ मधुमत्पार्थिवं रजः ॥ मधु धौरस्तु नः पिता ॥ मधुमाज्ञो

वनस्पतिर्मधुमां अस्तु सूर्यः ॥ माध्वीर्गावो भवन्तु नः ॥ ॐ मधु ॥ ॐ मधु ॥  
ॐ मधु ॥

"Sweet blow the winds and the rivers scatter sweetness! May the herbs and trees be full of honeyed sweetness! May night and morning yield us joy! May the dust of the earth be sweet unto us! May father Heaven give us happiness! May the sun shower Bliss on us! May the cows yield us all-sweetness! Om Joy! Sweetness! Bliss."

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## CHRISTIANITY AND THE HINDUS.

The Hindus worship the Prophet of Nazareth as an incarnation of God. And why? For, in him they find the living expression of that saving power which manifests itself on earth from time to time and brings about a readjustment in the existing moral and spiritual order of society. In him they find the fulfilment of the promise made by the Lord in the Gita—"Whenever there is decline of virtue and ascendancy of vice I body Myself forth. I am born again and again to protect the good, to destroy the wicked and establish religion."

The ideal presented by Christ is not new to the Hindus. Love, renunciation, purity, humility, prayer, meditation and such other ethical and spiritual virtues which he enjoins for the realisation of God are not foreign to India. They are rather the part and parcel of Indian consciousness. Whoever has studied the history of India will admit this. The Jews who belonged to the Semitic group of the human race were not prepared to receive Jesus. The Messiah whom they had been expecting and picturing in their minds was a ruler of men who would deliver them from the Roman yoke. They were, therefore, astounded at the scheme of life presented by Jesus. He belied their expectations by his transcendental spiritual message, and they crucified him taking him to

be an impostor. But the men from the East, so the story goes, came to Palestine following the course of a star and worshipped Jesus offering at his feet gold, frankincense and myrrh. This old legend is not without significance.

There are proofs which cannot altogether be set aside that the life and teachings of Christ came under the influence of India. For, who were these men from the East, and who again was John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ? There are scholars who are of opinion that the men from the East and John the Baptist were either Hindu or Buddhist monks who came to the land of the Jews on a missionary purpose. That India was in the heyday of her civilisation in those times and sent preachers, both Hindu and Buddhist, to China, Japan, Persia and countries of the Near East is accepted by many historians. How far true is the view that Christ and his religion were influenced by India, can only be decided in the light of further historical research. One thing that appears certain to us is that there are many elements in the life and gospel of the Nazarene, which show their similarity to Hindu and Buddhist ideas. We can say without any fear of contradiction that Christ and Christianity are, strictly speaking, not pure products of Judaism. Over and above the Semitic influence, they felt the touch of a civilisation which is decidedly superior and more broad-based—a civilisation that may be called akin to the Indo-Aryan civilisation. Is not the New Testament wherein are recorded the life-story of Jesus and his teachings a clear departure from the Old Testament? The New Testament places before you an outlook upon life that cannot easily match with the Hebrew traditions and the Hebrew cultural ideas and ideals. Of course, there have been attempts to reconcile these two books and construct out of them a comprehensive system by showing that one is the fulfilment of the other, independent of any foreign influence. But we for our part confess our inability to do so unless we admit and bring in the fact of Indo-Aryan influence.

When we go through the record of Christ's life and teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and in other parts of the Gospels, we feel that we are living in an Indian atmosphere. Almost every fact, scene or idea is surcharged with the fragrance of India. Let us look at the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Are not these Indian in tone? We think that they indicate a close kinship between Christian and Indian ideas of spiritual excellence. Again do not the verses—"Resist not evil," "Love your enemies," and "Overcome evil with good,"—show a clear Buddhistic stamp? There can be no doubt that the ideal of love presented by Christ in the New Testament is only another name for the ideal of Ahimsa as set forth by Buddha.

Unlike the Jewish teachers of old Jesus was pre-eminently a prophet of love. His heart bled for the suffering humanity. It embraced every man that lived, in its all-encompassing compassion and charity. Even when he was dying, nailed to the cross, not a word of curse or reproach came out of his lips. The body was suffering excruciating agony, but the heart was calm full of divine joy and peace. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," said he and prayed for his persecutors blessing them with all his heart. The history of the Hebrew race cannot furnish a single instance of such love and self-sacrifice. The Hebrew law is—"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." What a contrast is it to the Christian ideal of Ahimsa!

From all these considerations we come to the conclusion which we have stated beforehand, viz., that the Christianity of Christ is not a pure product of Judaism. Mr. C. F. Andrews, a liberal Christian (once a missionary) and a sincere lover of India and Indian ideals, and some others like him have written on the subject and shown what we ourselves want to establish.

Christ was indeed a unique figure in the history of the Hebrew race. Although he was not appreciated during his own lifetime, as prophets are not, the success of his mission was phenomenal in course of time. The lofty spiritual idealism embodied in his life and teachings gathered strength after his passing away and became a dynamo of spiritual energy revolutionising human thought. Europe of to-day with all her achievements in the different departments of life owes a great deal to Christ and his ethical religion. In the name of Christ there have been many many saints and ascetics who have lived the life of poverty, chastity, love, renunciation and service, returning blessing and benediction for persecution. In his name there have been numberless brotherhoods and organisations that have done incalculable good to man. In his name there have been countless institutions for the advancement of higher knowledge and culture. Really, as we peruse the accounts of the glorious services rendered by Christianity, our feeling is one of silent admiration. Not only the people of the West and of the land of his birth, but we who belong to the other countries of the East, India, China and Japan, are also indebted to Christianity.

The history of Christianity associated with much persecution and bloodshed is an interesting study. And its success—its extensive spread, was due to the wonderful perseverance, patience and self-sacrifice of the missionaries who carried the gospel from land to land to strange people. This reminds us of some of the Early Christian Mission Charges. They are: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves;" "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes;" "Eating and drinking such things as *they* give;" "Freely ye have received, freely give." What a grand ascetic tone do we find in these commandments! It must be said to the credit of the early Christian missionaries that many of them sincerely tried to approximate to the ideal as set forth here, and they therefore succeeded in converting people by thousands.

When the essentials of the spiritual life are forgotten



men give undue predominance to the non-essentials, and thus rituals and ceremonials come into existence. Rituals and ceremonials, divested of the inner spirit, however scrupulously observed, necessarily lead to bigotry, dogmatism and fanaticism. This is a great truth that applies to every religion, and Christianity is no exception. A student of the history of religions will certainly substantiate the truth of our remark. In the process of time the religion of Christ that was once so lofty in its ethical tone became degenerated, and it is this degenerated form of Christianity that we deny.

It is our opinion that the Christian church of to-day does not truly represent the Master and his ideal. And it is also the testimony of many Christians even that Christ, the Crucified Saviour, is not to be found in the church. Fraud, political wire-pulling, theological jugglery, bigotry and superstition, they say, are some of the many undesirable vices that characterise the church. Of course, there are exceptions. We quote here the remarks of Count Ilya Tolstoy, the son of the famous Russian idealist. He says: "Neither in America, nor in Europe there is any real Christianity. Churches are everywhere full of rank insincerity, nauseating hypocrisy, grossest sham. In the continent the churches are a veritable instrument of oppression in the hands of the government." It is indeed a very pessimistic picture if it is literally true.

The decadence of the Christian church is due to many reasons, of which infatuation caused by material prosperity and race-pride of the people of the West is among the primary ones. The church is nothing but one aspect and department of a community. When the community has gone down in its outlook upon life, the church, however lofty its ideal, cannot maintain its pristine purity; it must come down. For, it is from the community that the church recruits its members. So the decadence of the Christian church is only one side of the general degeneration that has come over the West.

The Son of Man knew not where to lay his head.

Poverty and renunciation were the guiding principles of his life. He was a monk of monks, an ascetic of ascetics, and his life and teachings were vehement protests against worldliness. He was aware that one cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. "Man shall not live by bread alone," was his injunction. "For," as he said, "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" But how far is the Christian church living this ideal of poverty and renunciation and upholding it to others is a question of grave doubt. Supported directly or indirectly by their respective churches the foremost Christian nations of the West are exploiting the weaker nations of the world, and not only that, seized by an uncontrollable craze for material prosperity they are always on the war-path, so to say, fighting among themselves. Instead of the Christian ideals of love and self-denial it is imperialism, commercialism and militarism which are reigning supreme everywhere in the West. "Love thy neighbours as thyself," was one of the commandments of Christ. It is a grand rule of life. But instead of that we find jealousy, hatred and race-arrogance running riot in the Christian countries of the West and their colonies. The Anti-Alien Bill of the United States of America and the Anti-Asiatic Act of South Africa are some of the outstanding facts which clearly indicate the height of colour and race prejudice. It is high time that there should be a change of heart among the Christian people and a true following of Christ. And it is the church, the custodian of religion, which can best reform the people by reforming itself.

Let us look at the matter with reference to India. Simultaneously with the establishment of British rule in this country Christianity came to exert its influence upon the people, and it must be said that this influence was by no means inconsiderable. The spread of Christianity in India was at once a blessing and a curse, and we shall show by facts and observations how it is so. India is a big country, as big as Europe minus Russia, containing a curious admixture of various types and groups of people

professing many religions. So to convert India, which Christianity aimed at, was not an easy task. Missionaries from Portugal, England, France, Germany and America equipped with immense funds and the wonderful organising capacity of the West invaded the land from different strategic points. Finding that the direct preaching of the gospel works not very successfully, they combined evangelisation with all sorts of humanitarian and educational activities that give material advantage. First of all, after their landing they picked up the vernaculars of the provinces where they wanted to work and mixed with the people quite freely. Then along with the building of churches they started hospital and educational work, and thus attracted the sympathy of the people. Besides, the new craze for English education and the culture of the West which the British occupation of India brought in its train was utilised to the best advantage. The progress of Christianity was therefore at first very phenomenal, and for a time it appeared as if India would be wholesale converted. It was indeed a critical period of the history of our country, specially of Hinduism, for this conversion meant nothing short of a cultural conquest. But this danger was averted by the preaching of some sturdy Hindu reformers, among whom Raja Ram Mohan Roy stands foremost in Bengal. India was saved. Hinduism nobly stood its ground.

It must not be understood that we are against Christianity and its principle of proselytisation. We are fully aware of the many benefits the religion of Christ has, directly or indirectly, done to India and her people. It must be said to the credit of the Christian missionaries that they have been the pioneers in many useful and beneficent lines of work, and we are undoubtedly grateful to them for all these. But in so far as Christianity meant to be a cultural subversion we call it a danger—a curse, and it has been for the good of India that its progress has been arrested. India is not in want of spiritual ideas and ideals. Of all countries it is India that evolved, several thousand years before the birth of

Christ, a religion which is the rationale of all moral and spiritual codes—the synthesis of all faiths and creeds, and we are proud of this fact. This religion which we may call Hinduism or better Vedanta is so capacious and comprehensive that it contains all the conceivable phases of the spiritual ideal from the highest flight of the absolutism of Brahman to the lowest form of image worship. When at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, proved to the hilt the unique position of Hinduism and its sublime grandeur, the President of the Scientific Section had to admit and say: "One of its chief advantages has been in the great lesson which it has taught the Christian World, especially to the people of the United States, namely, that there are other religions more venerable than Christianity, which surpass it in philosophical depth, in spiritual intensity, in independent vigour of thought, and in breadth and sincerity of human sympathy, while not yielding to it a single hair's breadth in ethical beauty and efficiency." Yes, Christianity as a religion has very little to contribute to Hinduism. And we may observe that Hinduism, which believes in the harmony of religions and has as such assimilated Buddhism, will before long swallow Christianity in the sense that it will cease to exist as *the* religion for the salvation of man. Let us only wait.

Before we conclude we like to make a few remarks as to the method followed by the Christian missionaries in India. It is the opinion of many, and we also subscribe to it, of course, not without sufficient reason, that this method has not been altogether honourable. At least it is not becoming of the "lambs among wolves" who are to "carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes,"—who are to "freely give," eating and drinking such things as chance would bring. To extol the glories of Christianity and make it acceptable to the people there has been a regular vicious campaign. The religion of the Hindus has been denounced; their national heroes and womanhood have been scandalised; their cultural

traditions and social customs have been exposed. And all this has been done from the pulpit and the press with little regard for truth, justice and fair play. The volumes of condemnatory literature full of all sorts of perverted facts and half-truths expressed in the most filthy language stand as witness. Is there any justification for such a conduct? Does it not prove the peculiar mentality of the so-called messengers of truth—their extreme narrowness and jealousy? Will it be wrong if the Hindus who have been thus treated say: "Why not save your own souls rather than those of the Heathens!"? The undue and unasked for concern for the salvation of the non-Christian races betrays only the imperialistic, predatory nature of the Christian missionaries which they must have inherited from their Semitic traditions. Christ was never for such a method of conversion. He came to fulfil and not to destroy. Let the missionaries in their zeal for proselytising never forget this, and let the Hindus who have ever been *mild* be a little aggressive and learn to defend themselves.

As we have said at the outset, we worship Christ and accept his ethical religion as one of the many paths for the attainment of the *summum bonum* of life. In the personality of the man and in his teachings there are many things which we hold valuable and dear to our heart. In fact, there have been among the Hindus persons who have had the vision of the Son of God, and felt in that blessed state that Jesus is a link in the chain of those God-men, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and so on, who have been declared as the saviours of mankind. That is not all. There are still among the Hindus persons who look upon Christ with the same amount of reverence as they show towards their recognised incarnations, and observe the Christmas as a day of consecration. Even if the considerations of the historical personality of the man be left out of account, it may be said that the Hindus in their efforts for Self-realisation are aspiring after Christhood. What does Christ stand for as an impersonal ideal? He may be said to signify

the acme of spiritual evolution—a state where there is “peace that passeth all understanding.” When Christ declared—“I and my Father are one,” he hinted at that transcendental state which can be attained by any one whether he is a Christian or not. It is the verdict of Vedanta that every one, knowingly or unknowingly, is struggling to make real in life the Christ-consciousness. For the Christ-consciousness is nothing but Divinity, and Divinity is the birthright of man. May Christhood ever continue to be the object of our homage and not the degenerated church of Christ maintained by sheer dogmatism, bigotry and fanaticism!

### RAMKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA.\*

BY THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY,  
P.C., G.C.S.E., G.C.I.E., etc.

The temple of Dakshineswar, a few miles above Calcutta, is easily picked out by any one steaming up the river (Hughly), by means of a group of tall casuarina trees, which can be seen from afar, standing in the temple grounds. It was built by a pious Bengali lady, Rani Rasmani, in the year A.D. 1855, and it was here that the famous saint of Dakshineswar spent the greater part of his life. Few men have made a deeper impress upon the mind of Bengal in recent years than Gadadhar Chatterji, known to history as Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa, and his chief disciple Narendra Nath Dutt, better known under the title of Swami Vivekananda. At a time when the craze for the ideas and ways of the West was at its height, these men stood for the ancient ideal of the East, for renunciation in an age of megalomania, for simplicity at a time when discoveries in mechanical science were making life elaborately complex.

\* From the writer's *The Heart of Aryavarta*, an appreciative study of India and Indian outlook. Some of the italics in the article are ours.—Editor, P.B.

The bright sun of a January day lit up the temple buildings and gave charm to the well-shaded grounds in which they stood, as I was shown the various objects which had acquired particular sanctity on account of their association with the departed saint. Here in the north-west angle of the courtyard was the room in which he had passed the greater number of his days. In the grounds on the north my attention was directed to a clump of five trees, the banyan, the pipal, the nim, the amlaki and the bael, planted at Ramkrishna's request. Here, it was said, he spent much time in meditation and the performance of religious exercises. Next it was explained that the two main shrines in the centre of the courtyard were dedicated to Radha and Krishna, representing God incarnate as love divine, and Kâli, the Mother of the universe, standing for the personal aspect of the Infinite God which appealed most strongly to Ramkrishna.

Standing in the temple precincts surrounded by a group of Indian admirers of the saint, all eager to tell of his life and teaching, I found myself being carried away by their enthusiasm, and as I listened to their story I had little difficulty in conjuring up vivid pictures of the Master surrounded by his disciples, expounding his great doctrine of salvation along the path of self-surrender and devotion to God. The setting was there before my eyes. It required no great effort of the imagination to reconstruct events. One pictured the Master, a benign figure pacing to and fro along the terrace in the cool of the evening, halting now and then to engage in conversation with his disciples. As the shades of evening spread over the great courtyard one could see in imagination the lamps in the temple flaming into light, and the fragrant smoke ascending from the incense-burners as they were swung by the servants of the temple. And then one seemed to hear the sound of the evening service breaking in upon the stillness, the tintinnabulation of gongs, bells and cymbals echoing away over the murmuring waters of the holy river. Presently, as a silver moon rose in the sky, trees and buildings would emerge from the dusk of even-

ing, thrown into sharp silhouette against the star-strewn background of the night. And appropriate to such a setting a venerable figure, bowing down before the Mother of the universe, rhythmically chanting the name of God, repeating the aphorisms in which were enshrined the guiding principles of his life: *Brahman Atman Bhagavân*, God the absolute, God of the Yogi, God of the devotee are one; *Saranagata, saranagata*, I am thine, I am thine; *Brahma-sakti Sakti-Brahman*, God the Absolute and the divine Mother are one. Thereafter the gradual assemblage of the disciples—keen, responsive young Bengalis in the white cotton chaddar and dhoti of the country, their dark eyes glowing with enthusiasm—followed by a discourse from the Master seated, cross-legged, in their midst.

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Born of Brahman parents on February 20, 1834, (?) Gadadhar Chatterji found himself drawn to a religious life from his boyhood, and he became an assistant priest at the temple of Dakshineshwar from the date of its construction in 1855. He was no scholar, yet he possessed the power of attracting to himself men of light and leading of the day—Keshub Chandra Sen, Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chatterji and Protap Mazumdar amongst others. The latter, one of the most devoted followers of Keshab Chandra Sen, seems to have been forcibly struck and a good deal puzzled by the influence which Ramkrishna exercised over educated men. "What is there in common between him and me?" he asked. "I, an Europeanised, civilised, self-centred, semi-sceptical, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, unpolished, half-idolatrous, friendless Hindu devotee? Why should I sit long hours to attend to him, I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Müller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines? . . . And it is not I only, but dozens like me who do the same." And after due deliberation he comes to the conclusion that it is his religion that is his only recommendation. But his



religion itself is a puzzle. "He worships Shiva, he worships Kâli, he worships Rama, he worships Krishna, and is a confirmed advocate of Vedantic doctrines. . . . He is an idolator, yet is a faithful and most devoted meditator of the perfections of the One formless, infinite Deity. . . His religion means ecstasy, his worship means transcendental insight, his whole nature burns day and night with a permanent fire and fever of a strange faith and feeling."

He studied the doctrine of the Vedanta at the feet of one Tota Puri, a holy man who took up his abode at the temple for the space of nearly a year. But it was along the path of worship (*bhakti*) rather than by way of knowledge (*gnâna*) that he sought for the solution of the mystery of the universe.\* By temperament he was a mystic rather than a philosopher. The narrative of his life and teaching recalls inevitably the emotional figure of Chaitanya. Like the great Vaishnava saint of Nadia he gave vent to his pent-up feelings in song and dance. Hymns to the deity sung by his favourite disciples reduced him to tears, and frequently induced in him a state of trance. He was subject to such trances from his boyhood, his first experience taking place at the age of eleven, when, according to his own account, he suddenly saw a vision of glory, and lost all sense-consciousness while walking through the fields. His knowledge of God was intuitive, and he never felt the need of systematic study. A discussion on the subject of the study of the Scriptures was once in progress among his disciples when he exclaimed, "Do you know what I think of it? Books—sacred scriptures—all point the way to God. Once you know the way, what is the use of books?" A

\* Not so. Sri Ramakrishna recognised the importance of the paths of Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma and attained the Supreme Ideal through each of them. The doctrine of harmony preached by him was not a matter of intellectual assent merely. It was the outcome of his personal realisation. For a full and comprehensive exposition of his life and teaching vide *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas.—Editor, P.B.

young man, typical of the educated middle classes of the day, obviously proud of his scholarship and knowledge of books and men, proceeded one day to the temple, attracted by the growing fame of the saint.\* On learning that he was no scholar and had no use for books, he expressed extreme surprise, and at his first meeting embarked upon an argument with him on the subject of image worship. Ramkrishna swept aside his scholarly arguments. "Why must you worry yourself about things above you and beyond your reach?" he asked. "Does not the Lord of the universe abide in the temple of the human body and know the innermost thoughts of men? Seek then to know and revere God. Love God. That is the duty nearest you."

Apparent contradictions were nothing to him. God is the Absolute, the One, the All, the Brahman of the philosopher. But that does not prevent him from manifesting Himself in different aspects in His relations with the phenomenal world—as Krishna in His aspect of divine love, as Kâli in His aspect of creator of the universe and saviour of mankind. And when you realise God, such things cease to puzzle. "Sir, is it possible to see God?" asked the scholar. "Certainly," came the reply. "Cry unto the Lord with a yearning heart, and you shall see Him." It is clear from the testimony of his disciple that he himself constantly attained that pitch of spiritual exaltation which is called by the Hindus *samadhi*, a state of trance induced by God-consciousness—that communion with the Infinite enjoyed by the Rishis of old and spoken of by Professor B. N. Sen as the bliss of Brahman, which is beyond all words and above all reason.

The pantheism so congenial to Indian thought was

\* Professor M. N. Gupta, a teacher in Calcutta who subsequently became a devoted disciple of Ramkrishna, and under the nom-de-plume of "M" wrote an account of his life and teaching entitled the "Gospel of Sri Ramkrishna." The sketch of the saint and his teaching which I have drawn in this chapter is based upon Professor Gupta's narrative.

his by instinct.\* He was in the habit in his younger days of plucking flowers for the daily worship in the temple. On one occasion, we are told, he was gathering the leaves of the bael tree when a portion of the bark was torn from the tree. It seemed to him that a severe wound had been inflicted upon the Divinity which was within him, and was equally manifested in all things. So deeply was the idea of God immanent rooted in his soul that he never again picked the leaves of the trees. Difficulties put forward by man's reason were brushed aside. If they could not be explained by reason, they were discounted by faith. From the point of view of pure logic, consequently, his explanations were at times lacking in conviction. His reply to the question why, if everything is but a manifestation of God, should some things be harmful is a case in point. He quoted the story of a devout young man who refused, when warned to do so, to move out of the way of a charging elephant. The driver shouted, but the young man said to himself, "the elephant is a manifestation of the Divinity," and instead of fleeing from him he began to chant his praises. When he was subsequently picked up and restored to consciousness, he explained why he had not moved away, but was chided by his *guru* in these words, "It is true that God manifests himself forth in everything. But if he is manifest in the elephant, is he not equally manifest in the driver? Tell me then why you paid no heed to his warning voice?"

With even scantier consideration he brushed aside the question of the apparent partiality of God. "Am I then, Sir," asked Pandit Vidyasagar on one occasion, "to believe that we come into the world with unequal endowments? Is the Lord partial to a select few?" To which the Master replied, "Well, I am afraid you

\* The prevailing philosophy of India which is Vedanta is not pantheism, for it considers the Ultimate Reality not as exhausted in the world. Sri Ramakrishna cannot also be called a pantheist, for he realised God both as immanent and transcendent and preached the same.—Editor, P. B.

will have to take the facts of the universe as they stand. It is not given to man to see clearly into the ways of the Lord."

The value which he attached to ratiocination and inspiration respectively, is well illustrated by a scene which took place one afternoon in the presence of a number of his disciples in the grounds of the temple. "Is there any book in English on the art of reasoning?" he asked one of his Western-educated followers. He was informed that there were such treatises and, as an example, was told of that part of logic which dealt with reasoning from general propositions to particulars. He appeared to pay little attention to these explanations, which evidently fell flat upon his ear. And looking at him a little while after, his would-be instructor marvelled and became speechless. I give the description of the scene in his own words. "The Master stands motionless. His eyes are fixed. It is hard to say whether he is breathing or not. . . . The smile on his lips shows ecstatic delight that he feels at the sight of the blessed vision. Yes, he must be enjoying a vision of unequalled beauty which puts into the shade the refulgence of a million moons! Is this God vision? If so, what must be the intensity of Faith and Devotion, of Discipline and Austerity which has brought such a vision within reach of mortal man?" The writer goes on to tell us that he wended his way home with this unique picture of *samadhi* and the ecstasy of divine love vividly reflected in his mind, and that there echoed within him as he went these words, "Be incessantly merged, O my mind, in the sweetness of his love and bliss! Yes, be thou drunken with the joy of the Lord!"

Ramkrishna did not dissent from the monistic explanation of the universe. It was only that he was driven by temperament to attach far greater importance to the Personal Aspect of God. The Absolute of Sankara could be realised, but only in perfect *samadhi*. On one occasion half returning to consciousness from a state of trance he was heard exclaiming, "Yes, my

Holy Mother (Kâli) is none other than the Absolute. She it is to whom the six systems of philosophy with all their learned disquisitions furnish no clue. But when a man returned from *samadhi* he became a differentiated ego once more, and was thrown back upon the world of relativity so that he perceived the world-system (*maya*) as real. Why? Because with the return of his egoity he was convinced that he as an individual was real; and "so long as his ego is real to him (real relatively) the world is real too, and the Absolute is unreal (unreal relatively)." He laid constant stress upon this.

The saint returning from *samadhi* could say nothing about the Absolute. "Once differentiated, he is mute as to the undifferentiated. Once in the relative world his mouth is shut as to the Absolute and Unconditioned." And since *samadhi* was not achieved by the average man, he must meditate upon and commune with the Personal God, for "so long as you are a person you cannot conceive of, think or perceive God otherwise than as a Person."

In Ramkrishna's own case this latter difficulty was undoubtedly a predilection as much as a necessity, for by temperament he was emotional rather than critical. "As a rule," he declared, "the devotee does not long for the realisation of the Impersonal. He is anxious that the whole of his ego should not be effaced in *samadhi*." And the reason which he gives is the one to be expected from a man of his temperament. "He would fain have sufficient individuality left to him to enjoy the Vision Divine as a person. He would fain taste the sugar in place of being one with the sugar itself."

His creed was summed up by him during a visit to Pandit Sasadhar in Calcutta one afternoon in 1884. Many paths lead to God, the path of knowledge, that of works and that of self-surrender and devotion. The way of knowledge is for the philosopher. His object is to realise Brahman the Absolute. He says "*neti, neti*" ("not this, not this"), and so eliminates one unreal thing after another until he arrives at a point at which all

discrimination between the Real and the Unreal ceases. The way of works is that laid down in the *Gîtâ*, to live in the world but not to be of the world; to practise at all times an exalted altruism. Neither of these paths is easy to travel in the present age. It is almost impossible in these materialistic days to get rid of the conviction that the self is identical with the body. How, then, can a man understand that he is one with the universal soul, the Being Absolute and Unconditioned? Similarly with the way of works. A man may form a resolution to work without expectation of any reward or fear of punishment in this world or the next; but the chances are that consciously or unconsciously he will get attached to the fruit of his work. Let a man then choose the way of worship and seek communion with the Personal God, for the path of love, adoration and self-surrender to God is the easiest of all paths. It teaches the necessity of prayer without ceasing, it is in this age "the shortest cut leading to God."

Early in 1886 Ramkrishna was taken seriously ill. A graphic account of the suffering of his last hours in the garden of Cossipur surrounded by his disciples, is given by Professor Gupta in a passage of great pathos. He died not long after his fifty-second birthday.

Many of the young men who flocked to the temple at Dakshineswar in the eighties of last century are preaching the gospel of the Master. Those who, following his example, have adopted the path of renunciation have established a monastic order, the headquarters of which are at Belur Math on the opposite bank of the Hugly to Dakshineswar, with branch monasteries in Bengal, the United Provinces and Madras. Associated with the monastic order which consists of *sannyasins* and *brahmacharins* is a mission, these twin organisations standing for renunciation and service respectively, declared by the late Swami Vivekananda to be the two national ideals of India. The mission undertakes service of all kinds, social, charitable and educational. The monasteries are dedicated to the perpetuation through

their spiritual culture of the great Ideal and Revelation which Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa embodied in his life. One of these branch monasteries, the Ashram of Mayavati hidden away from the world in the vast labyrinth of the Himalayas fifty miles north-east of Almora, is devoted exclusively to the study of Advaita Vedanta, leading to knowledge of the Brahman proclaimed by Sankara, the absolute, impersonal and unconditional God—the material and efficient cause of the universe.

Some of these men I have met at Belur Math. And having met them I know that it is for no colourless abstraction that they have renounced the world. Whether known as *saguna* Brahman (God Personal) or as *nirguna* Brahman (God Impersonal), it is to them the sole reality, the ultimate goal towards which sooner or later all mankind must direct its steps.

## “RELIGION : ITS NEGATIVE SIDE.”

BY PANDIT SURESHWAR SHASTRI.

Major B. D. Basu, I.M.S. (Retired), writing in the February number of *The Modern Review* under the caption, “*Religion : Its Negative Side*,” comes to the conclusion: “Religion has hampered the upward and onward march of humanity, because it is responsible for (i) intolerance and causing persecution of so-called heretics and infidels and suppression of freedom of thought, (ii) degradation of women and sanction of religious prostitution, (iii) bringing into existence a class of people known as ascetics who do very little good to society (it also makes fanatics), and (iv) fostering superstition.” Major Basu adduces a number of quotations in support and elaboration of his theme and is very emphatic in his assertions.

This indeed is a serious arraignment of religion that it has clogged the progress of humanity. It would have been fairer if the writer had devoted greater space and

more thoughtful consideration to the justification of his attitude. As it is, the article is scrappy and meagre and does not evince the amount of thoughtfulness and deliberation that such a thesis reasonably requires, and does not indicate that experiential knowledge which alone entitles a man to pronounce on a subject of such extensive range and profound significance. A few examples will bear out our point. Major Basu begins by confessing that "it is very difficult to define religion," and adds, "Perhaps those thinkers are correct who consider it as a psychological phenomenon and a concern of individual subjective thought." From this it would naturally follow that the writer, in speaking about the negative side of religion, will dwell on the negative side of that particular psychological phenomenon. But in the next sentence he shifts his grounds and declares that since that particular opinion about religion did not prevail, therefore "*it* (*i.e.*, religion itself) has done incalculable mischief by setting man against man, nation against nation." Wonderful reasoning! Mr. X is a great scholar. Some one takes him to be an ignoramus and treats him as such. Ergo, Mr. X deserves and is responsible for that treatment.

Religion, in whatever sense we may take it, is admittedly a difficult subject to deal with. Its bearings and implications are intricate and far-flung, and scope indefinable. Besides, being the acme of human thought, aspiration and experience, it exerts a potent and far-reaching influence on all departments of life. Often therefore practices and institutions of quite different origins assume religious garbs and are fathered on religion by the popular mind. Discriminating scholarship carefully sorts them according to their causal relations, and often discovers in so-called religion, elements which are purely social or environmental and which would have been there even if there were no religion to sponsor them.

Take for instance the caste system. Is it a religious or social institution? Major Basu does not



pause to think it over. He flies at Hindu religion for having advocated it. Without going into the merits or demerits of the caste system, one may safely say that to quote it as a negative side of Hindu religion is a premature conclusion. If Major Basu had shown that the institution is purely or mainly of religious origin, his castigation of religion on that score would have been justified. The word religion in the present instance may be aptly substituted by the term society in a comprehensive sense. It may be argued that the caste system is spoken of in the Hindu scriptures in the same breath with the theories of soul and God and can be therefore justly considered religious. But is the Sanskrit term *Dharma* equivalent to English religion? *Dharma* comprehends all that pertain to the well-being of man, including social laws and customs,—this is peculiarly a Hindu conception,—and religion is only a segment of it.

But even supposing that untouchability and caste system are aspects of religion, can we say that religion has thereby "hampered the upward and onward march of humanity?" No one will accuse the Americans of too much religiosity. Why then is there such sinister untouchability and caste prejudices against the Negroes and the Red Indians? Is religion responsible for the doings of the Ku Klux Klan? At least there is no lynching here in India! Why are Indians treated like untouchables in South Africa? The whites there are not particularly religious! Why are Indians of the status of Major Basu treated as untouchables in the first and second class compartments of the Indian railways by the whites and the semi-whites? These latter are not specially devoted to Hindu religion! Why are there so many class distinctions in the modern world which prides itself on having cast aside religious sentiments and prejudices? You cannot say that but for religion, there would not have been so much of hatred and jealousy. It is the evils of the human mind, that are the real source of all those factions and schisms in the human society, and religion happens to be only one of the channels of their

flowing out, and if religion had refused to be their tool, they would have sought out other tools, as indeed they are doing in the present age.

Similarly his criticism of religion as fostering superstition and spreading false notions regarding anthropology is beside the mark. Did religion *create* these superstitions and false anthropological notions? The contrary is more likely the truth. The primitive man grows through superstitions; these tinge all his institutions including religion. Of course, superstition is not truth. But whether superstition is not beneficial to the cause of humanity, is not easy to decide. What is superstition to me is not so to another. What appears as superstition at one stage of mental evolution does not appear so at another. Even the primitive superstitions are nothing but vague imaginings of actual truths, and have been as such as beneficial to the primitive people as scientific truths are now to us. And as humanity yet comprises people who are not as rational and scientific as some of us are, the presence of so-called superstition in religion may not be an unmitigated evil.

Not all his shafts, however, have missed their aims in this way. Some of his criticisms are at least partially merited by religion, specially where religion has allowed its name to be exploited by secular institutions for securing longevity and respectability. We admit, for instance, that the *Devadasi* system is an unnecessary evil, though we emphatically repudiate that it is "religious prostitution" *sanctioned* by Hinduism. *Devadasis* only sing and dance before the deities, nothing more. It is true that as a class they are of questionable morals; but to say that such moral lapses are *required* and *sanctioned* by religion is preposterous. Religion is blamable in this case only to the extent that it requisitions the services of an institution of which the vileness of man can easily take advantage. But it is good to remember in this connection that in the Northern India where the *Devadasi* system does not prevail, "secular" prostitution is rampant in a measure which is unknown in the south.

It is also apparently true that "in the name of religion, blood has been shed, murders have been committed, lives have been lost and property has been wantonly destroyed." But it is significant that "it is the Semitic religions which are more responsible for the state of affairs mentioned above," and also that the proselytising religions with the exception of Buddhism (which differs essentially from its fellows in its method of proselytisation) are all Semitic. Major Basu quotes from D. G. Ritchie's *Natural Rights* that "persecution, in the sense of repression for the purpose of maintaining true doctrine, is the outcome of Christianity." But before convicting religion we may conveniently remember that all those evils live even now under different guises in spite of the modern world being so blatantly irreligious. The fact is, it is no inherent defect in the Semitic religions that primarily caused or causes religious persecution. Persecution comes from a fundamental defect in the *character* of the Semitic and most European races. There is such a thing in their race-mind as makes them exclusive, intolerant and oppressively aggressive. This characteristic works itself out in various ways and forms, through religion, politics and social polity. If you stop its outlets through religion, it will seek other channels of manifestation. The hatred of the Greeks for the Barbarians and the Helots, of the Romans for the Plebeians, of the Jews for the Philistines, of the Christians for the Heathens and the Heretics, of the Muhammedans for the Kaffirs and the Infidels, and of the modern Whites for the Coloured Peoples,—all these are but expressions of the same fundamental exclusiveness. Considered in this light, religion does not appear as criminal as Major Basu would have it to be. Besides, with the ancient Hebrews as well as the Christians and the Muhammedans, religion has been so inextricably mixed up with politics, that new religious opinions have always meant new political factions, and the so-called religious persecution has been a political necessity. And

blood-shed and assassination as political weapons have not yet become obsolete.

Then about animal sacrifice: It is certainly not the best religion nor very humane. But it may be said on behalf of Hinduism that it does not enjoin it on all and sundry indiscriminately. Only those who are of predominantly *rajasic* and *tamasic* temperaments (and they are by nature impervious to subtle feelings) may sacrifice animals. The presence of slaughter houses and meat stalls in every city and the overwhelming number of their customers are a strong reproof to any excessive concern at humane feelings being shocked by animal sacrifice on ceremonial occasions. Humanity is not yet so refined. One may, of course, question the nobility of a conception which associates Godhead with animal sacrifice. But that is a different question altogether. In the meantime, we may remember that the prescription of animal sacrifice is not psychologically quite futile and insignificant.

A truer description of Major Basu's thesis would be "Abuse of Religion." The evils he ascribes to religion are evils that necessarily attend the growing and evolving humanity and would exist even if there be no religion. They are begotten of the imperfections of the undeveloped and unillumined minds, and to eradicate and destroy them we shall have to adopt other means than vilifying religion. The writer castigates religion for customs, practices and beliefs which are either not religious at all, or only nominally and apparently religious being in fact of quite different origins, or intended honestly by religion but defiled by the natural vices of the human mind. The writer himself admits towards the end that many secular motives underlie the so-called religious propaganda.

Major Basu's arguments not only suffer from confusion of issues, but are also sometimes, we are led to think, not above prejudice, as his tirades against "a class of people known as ascetics" testify. There are a class of people to whom ascetics are eyesore, not because they are essentially bad, but because they are a re-

proachful reminder of those people's worldly outlook. We are sure Major Basu is not one of them. He says he has nothing to say against the *ideal* of asceticism. But it seems he does not want it to be practised, at least not by many. For he says that "religion has hampered the upward and onward march of humanity, because it is responsible for bringing into existence a class of people known as ascetics who do very little good to society." He disapproves of the "ascetics as a class who practise asceticism not from any higher motive than that of securing their happiness." So doing good to society is the standard by which men are to be judged, and who would deny that it is a fine ideal? But may we ask Major Basu who told him that being happy is so much worse than being useful citizens? He quotes Prof. Clifford. Supposing that the ascetics' objective is happiness, is Prof. Clifford's and Major Basu's knowledge of life and its aims so sure and perfect that he can on that basis abuse a class of men who are held in high esteem by the vast majority of his countrymen? "In India, the class of ascetics passing under the names of Yogis, Sadhus, Fakirs, etc., is a great pest and nuisance and represents degraded humanity." These are scarcely responsible words, and only a complete knowledge entitles one to be so positive and contemptuous. What does Major Basu know of asceticism? Did he ever practise it? Did he mix with the ascetics? His denunciations scarcely appear to have come out of experiential knowledge.

But we deny that the ascetics are mere seekers of personal happiness. As a class, they are the most unselfish and altruistic people the world has ever seen; and it is impossible to find their peers anywhere. Surely history is eloquent of their unselfish services. Who does not know what the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Muhammedan ascetics have done for mankind? Major Basu who besides being an authority on religion, is also an authority on history, ought to have remembered that Indian civilisation owes almost all its greatness to these

hated ascetics. It is sheer ingratitude for a Hindu at least to cry them down. It is indeed strange to favour asceticism and decry ascetics. An ideal is no ideal if it is not practised; and in practice, there must be both success and failure. And it is not surprising that there are backsliders among ascetics. But can we therefore justifiably condemn the whole class?

Evidently the writer wishes that only the perfect, if any, should enter the rank of ascetics. For all others therefore, there remains the alternative of belonging to that other class of people who form almost the whole of mankind and are generally known as householders. Does Major Basu really think that this latter class is on the whole a better set of people than the ascetics? Do these always seek the good of others and never their personal happiness? An unbiased comparison of these two classes will not yield, we are afraid, very flattering results.

Major Basu forgets that ascetics are not born but are recruited from among the householders. If therefore the recruits are not such fine materials, it is not the ascetics but the householders that are to be blamed. So long as asceticism is recognised as an ideal of life (and it will be so recognised for many many years yet to come, in spite of Major Basu and persons of his ilk), there will be many to pursue it. And the best service one can do to one's society is to utilise one's powers in improving the people from whom asceticism derives its following. The fact is, ascetics and householders are inter-related parts of a single whole, and they rise and fall with the rise and fall of each other. If it is true that the ascetics are fallen low to-day, it is because the householders are fallen still lower.

There is a self-imposed moderation which should characterise criticisms of institutions that are objects of great veneration of large sections of mankind. We regret Major Basu's criticism does not evince that restraint. Let us hope he will balance it by next giving us his opinions of the Positive Side of Religion.

## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 140.)

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

इत्यभिप्रेत्य मनसा ह्यावन्त्यो द्विजसत्तमः ॥

उन्मुच्य हृदयग्रन्थीन् शान्तो मिश्रुरभून्मुनिः ॥ ३१ ॥

The Lord said :

31. Thus resolved is his mind, the good Brahmana of Avanti succeeded in removing the knots<sup>1</sup> of his heart and became a Sannyasin, calm and silent.

[<sup>1</sup> Knots &c.—viz. egoism.]

स चचार महीमेतां संयतात्मेन्द्रियानिलः ॥

मिश्रार्थं नगरग्रामानसङ्गोऽलक्षितोऽविशत् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. With his mind, organs and Pranas under control, he wandered over the earth alone, entering towns and villages only to beg his food, and none knew who he was.

तं वै प्रवयसं मिश्रुमवधुतमसज्जनाः ॥

दृष्ट्वा पर्यभवन्भद्र बह्वीभिः परिभूतिभिः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Seeing that aged shabby-looking monk, the wicked people, my friend, insulted him with various indignities.

केचित्त्रिवेणुं जगृहुरेके पात्रं कमण्डलुम् ॥

पीठं चैकेऽक्षसूत्रं च कन्यां वीराणि केचन ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Some took his triple staff and some his begging-bowl and water-pot ; some took his seat and rosary of Rudraksha beads and some his tattered clothes and wrapper.

प्रदाय च पुनस्तानि दर्शितान्याददुर्मनेः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Then, showing them to him they returned those things, but again snatched them from the silent monk.

(To be continued).

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF INDIAN LEADERSHIP.

It is not idle to speculate on the necessary qualifications of an ideal Indian leader. If only we consider the tremendous waste of time and labour, of man and money power, that unqualified and unilluminated leadership means and has meant throughout the last stages of the national evolution, and the bewildering confusion that changed minds and changed programmes create in the national mind, we would at once agree that more knowledge and better equipment of our leaders are an urgent desideratum. Specially so, when we remember that India is pre-eminently a land of religion. Here even such secular things, as politics, social polity, industry, art, literature or education, have to be viewed from the standpoint of spirituality, thus necessitating the national leader to be not only thoroughly versed in secular knowledge, but also in knowledge spiritual. He must be, above all, a spiritual leader.

The following six qualifications, we think, are essential: *Firstly*, as we are a self-oblivious nation, lost to the consciousness of our national ideal and divorced from the ancient springs of action which influenced the daily life of our forefathers, the prime necessity in India is the revival and rehabilitation of the central motif of the nation. That being obviously religion, the ideal national leader should be pre-eminently religious. But religious in what manner or degree? India is the mother and home of almost all the religions of the world, of innumerable sects and creeds and philosophies. The ideal leader must, therefore, be informed about all those creeds and philosophies, not merely intellectually, for that in matters spiritual is of secondary value, but also in a deeper sense. He must practise them, undergo all the disciplines pertaining thereto and attain to their prescribed goals. These then are the first requisites,—an intellectual and spiritual knowledge of the different religions and philosophies of India. Next, he must discover the



synthesis of all those apparently warring creeds, inasmuch as without the discovery and declaration of such a synthesis, the foundation of the Indian nationality will not be laid. This synthetic vision then is the *second* qualification of our ideal leader. But it must be clearly understood that this synthesis is not mere eclecticism. Not only it must contain all the religions, but every religion also must find it within itself. Or the contemplated synthesis will turn out only another new creed. The *third* qualification is the leader's thorough acquaintance with the culture of the West. It is futile and foolish to think of the future of India as a purely Indian organisation. No nation on the face of the earth can with impunity dream of isolating herself from and barring the influence of other nations. India specially cannot deny the West. Our leader therefore must be thoroughly conversant with the spirit of the Occidental culture and civilisation, its customs and traditions, its hopes and aspirations, its ways and means, its probable future. For, the West is on the move and undergoing rapid changes, and unless we are sure of its future developments, no real and permanent union with her would be possible. He must learn to separate the grain from the chaff. To that end, a wide foreign travel is necessary for our leader, and the religion which the West consciously or unconsciously lives will also have to be realised and owned by him. This much accomplished, the next or the *fourth* step would be the finding of the synthesis of the East and the West. It must, of course, be the platform of spirituality on which the two parties shall shake hands in promise of eternal understanding and union. The synthesis will have to be conceived as a Spiritual Principle of which the different nations and their activities are so many varied expressions, making up altogether a beautiful harmonious whole. Thus also will be found out the future outlook of the Indian nationality, and the proportions and relations in which India should assimilate the Western culture. The *fifth* qualification is our leader's intimate acquaintance with the masses of India, with

their millions of villages, their lores and traditions, their beliefs and customs, their hopes and ambitions, their troubles and tribulations. And not only with the masses, but he must be acquainted with all, from the prince to the Pariah, who inhabit this great country. Therefore he must travel all over India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, as a pilgrim, mixing and living with all, and dreaming and visualising all the glories of her past and regaining through them the lost clue of her historical continuity. He must be a skilled student of the different vernaculars, of Indian art and science, of sociology and politics, of folklore and philosophy, that the vision of Indian manhood that will greet his spiritual eye, may be one perfect in body, mind and soul. When he has achieved this much, he has almost qualified himself for competent leadership. Only one condition remains to be fulfilled: the synthesising of the spiritual and the secular in our individual and collective life. For, though such synthesis has not been unknown in the past, it cannot be denied it was very limited. The future obviously will be one of tremendous activity along apparently secular lines. This secularity, however, will have to be spiritualised, if the stability of the nation is to be ensured. Hence the need of the proposed synthesis. This is the *last* of the qualifications of our ideal leader, to which, however, must be added a heart as broad as the sky and as deep as the ocean, and a will as strong as steel.

The idea of such a perfection may seem Utopian to the unthinking. But the history of India testifies to some at least having been born in this land, who in outline corresponded to the above description. Of course, every age has its own problems, and what is, above all, wanted is that the leader should be able to declare: "I have known the Truth!" Such leaders have been known here. They are considered God-appointed or God Himself incarnate. One such leader was enough to guide us for two or three centuries, and we were required only to act according to the laid down Dharma. Whenever there has been a decline of religion, such leaders

have come, and the Lord's promise in the Gita has not been in vain. We of to-day do not, however, believe in such mythical doctrines. We have been drawn into the maelstrom of so-called modernism; and our ideals forgotten, we are running mad after politics. That is why we seek a new leader every two or three years. We have forgotten that our life, individual and national, is based on eternal verities; and only on their knowledge, can one base his claim for Indian leadership. Let us remember that there is a Conscious Divine Will behind the affairs of men, and knowledge of that Will and oneness with it is the secret, authority and insignia of true leadership. Is such a one already born amongst us? If not, let us watch. God has never failed us before. He will not fail us now.

#### THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna fell this year on Sunday, the 14th February, and numerous reports of its celebration have been received from many different quarters of India and abroad. The number of festivals is growing larger annually as reports show, and this testifies that the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna is being more and more deeply appreciated everywhere. "The professed votaries of Sri Ramakrishna," as Mr. K. Natarajan of *The Indian Social Reformer* observed as chairman of the Bombay anniversary meeting, "may be counted by hundreds and thousands, but the grand truth that he preached and proved by his own life has reached far beyond the limits of India, and is fast becoming a pervading world influence." Slowly and steadily Sri Ramakrishna is coming into his own. The great truths that his life demonstrated are the spiritual foundation of life and the harmony of religions. And who can deny that in India at least, these are the most urgent requirements, recognised even by the practical politics of to-day? In the acceptance and assimilation of this grand life into the individual and collective life of India lies her salvation. Verily there is no other way.

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upe. I. iii. 4.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI.

MAY, 1926.

No. 5.

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## THE IDEAS, IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.\*

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA.

Whether he wishes it or not, man from his very birth finds himself concerned, confronted and conjoined always with two mysterious, vast, indefinite objects—the internal and the external world, or to speak more accurately, with two sets of phenomena, of which, learning in time to get a collective outlook, he comes to a sort of indefinite knowledge of the existence of two separate worlds, the internal and the external, and finds them acting and reacting on each other through him. His body, his mind and his ego forming part and parcel of them both, he finds himself to be the mysterious joining point or the connecting link between the two.

Proceeding in time to search and find out the truth about them, he sees naturally that two paths of inquiry

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\* Paper read at the Convention of the Order on 3rd April, 1926.

are open to him—the subjective and the objective. And the former of these seeming nearer and more likely to lead him to truth, he begins to advance rapidly through it. 'Know thy own Self,' 'Know That by knowing which you will know the mystery of everything in this universe'—became the motto at this time throughout the then civilised world. The old Vedic Rishis, Kapila, Krishna and Buddha in India, Laotze in China, Socrates in Greece, Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and many others in Egypt and other countries, joined in the quest and gave from time to time the results of their researches in what knowledge the human race possesses of philosophy and metaphysics. Considering well what little objective knowledge mankind had at the time, they came to the conclusion that it would never be possible to know the ultimate Reality through that path and took to the lines of deep meditation, of self-introspection and self-control to reach the goal. The terms in which they expressed the ultimate Reality after realisation, however, come so near to and are so much alike to one another that they lead us to think that each one of the great ancient seers must have arrived exactly at the same point on the mental plane to get such a similar view of the underlying Truth or Reality. Ancient history records the fact that all those great seers of old, Kapila, Krishna, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus and others, used to drive so deep within themselves while following the introspective method of meditation, that they used to have trances, or that they forgot the existence of the outside world and of their own body during the time. It appears also from them that India used to be ahead of other countries in following this subjective path.

The sum and substance of the results obtained by the old seers at different times may be summed up as follows : That the ego in man is but a limited expression of the permanent part of him, the Soul or Self or Atman or Brahman; that the Atman or Brahman is the unlimited universal substratum of everything and therefore it is one without a second; that the highest illumination is attained

on realising one's oneness with this Atman or ultimate Reality; that the impersonal Atman or Brahman appears to us as the universe and the personal God in our attempts to know It through our limited mind and intellect. These results of course were obtained by following the method for many many centuries, of which history gives us but a very imperfect record. In the meantime the objective knowledge of the human race went on increasing and accumulating, and the advance of trade and commerce brought in facilities for interchange and spread of thoughts and ideas.

The historians of the West give us the idea that the attempt to reach the Truth by the objective method was not resorted to by the human race until a little after the Renaissance, when the human mind found itself free for the first time from its old moorings in Europe. The writings of the distinguished European authors of that period and a little after that time, e.g., *The Novum Organum* of Lord Bacon, they cite as testifying to the fact. However true it might be for the Western countries, India has a different account of its own on this point. The Western savants have not yet been able to find how old the civilisation of India is, in spite of their different assertions about it from time to time. They have been compelled to push it back several thousand years by the findings of certain excavations quite recently made in some parts of Western India, and it seems possible that they will have to alter their present conclusions also in time. It is best for us, therefore, to hold fast to the old traditions prevalent in the country and to the records which our scriptures and old books supply us on the point.

The Swami Vivekananda seemed to hold the opinion that Indian civilisation was the oldest on the globe, and that all other countries were indebted to the Vedas of India for the idea of the immortality of the Soul of man and Its oneness with ultimate Reality underlying the universe. We can have our own opinions regarding the same and wait to accept it until it has been proved clearly by the evidence of history. But the great strides that

India made of old to develop her objective knowledge proves clearly the fact that far from ignoring it she used to pursue it with great zeal in almost every direction, centuries before the Renaissance in Europe. Her researches with plants and metals in the field of medicine, her surgery and astronomy, her theory of the creation of the universe from atoms and speculations regarding the nature of them, as are to be found in the Vaishesika philosophy, her methods of ship-building and navigation and the principles for organised, successful government of a country, as are to be found in her old books, all tend to prove the fact.

Liberty of thought and action was never put down by law in old India, in the field of religion and philosophy or in pursuing one's research in any kind of knowledge. What they wanted strictly from every individual of the community was to subscribe to the rules and customs of society, and to the belief in the sanctity and the truth of the records of super-conscious experiences of the great seers, that are to be found in the Vedas, and especially in the Vedanta part of it. And it seems that this belief in the authority of the Vedas arose after the nation had found repeatedly convincing proofs about it in the lives of the devotees who had followed them with sincere and earnest zeal, and after the attainment of the supreme stage of super-consciousness had been rendered into a perfect science by the religious leaders. Thus we find knowledge divided principally into two main divisions, the *parâ* and the *oparâ*—the higher, by which the unlimited, ultimate Reality or the absolute, unchangeable Truth could be realised, and the lower, by which relative truths regarding all objects within the boundaries of time, space and causation—music, painting, sculpture, architecture, in short everything—were gained.

In Europe and the Far West, where the end of the subjective path had not been attained before, the Renaissance brought in a terrible reaction. Everything relating to the subjective method was thrown overboard, and the educated lost all faith in religion and the super-conscious

state. Rebellion against the church and the priests became the order everywhere, and the society went through convulsions, the like of which they had never seen before. The objective method of realising truths was then resorted to with all avidity and was taken up as the panacea for all evils.

History has recorded the fact that the pursuance of the objective method brings material prosperity in its train. India had been the centre of that prosperity for a long time. That centre changed now to Europe and the Western countries, after they had followed that path for a few centuries. The ranks in society in them became gradually divided and established from now on individual rights and on money basis, and material prosperity at any cost became the motto of the European nations. Wealth and prosperity overflowed the countries, but in place of peace and contentment brought in an unbounded desire for gain and power and made the struggle for existence keener every day. The discontent went on increasing and began to express itself from time to time in various parts of Europe, through more and more demands of the people for individual and collective rights. It beheaded kings, overthrew empires, spread the horrors of revolution in France and other countries, and still the people thought they were advancing in the right direction towards a higher civilisation and to everlasting peace through respecting the rights of one another. Even women caught the contagion and ranged themselves against men in suffragette bands and tried to wrest from them more privileges and rights for their sex. Until at last came the Great War and proved the utter futility of basing society and civilisation on the ideals on which they had been building so long.

However much we may extol the objective method, hypnotised by the glamour of the material prosperity of the Western civilisation, we shall have to admit the fact that nowhere has it yet enabled man to reach the ultimate Reality and thereby to attain to everlasting peace and



contentment by controlling the desires of the flesh. In ancient India the objective method was followed with vigour, but was never allowed to delude the mind with its undue importance and to transcend its boundaries. With due respect for the path, it was always confined to its own place of discovering relative truths and laws and the applications of them to make human life rich and comfortable. But the basic principles of individual, social and national life were always taken from the great conclusions arrived at by following the subjective method. Self-control was the foundation on which life's whole structure rested, and the ranks in society were measured and divided by that unit of standard. Money and the comforts of life had their value, but a life of renunciation for a noble ideal was regarded much higher and commanded the esteem of all grades of society. Thus poverty had never been the stumbling-block to the recognition of one's greatness in society, and "plain living and high thinking" was always held up as the ideal. Then again the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation—that we are reaping the results of what we sowed in our former incarnation and will have to reap in our next birth what we are sowing in this—kept the people from being discontented with their own lot and getting jealous of their neighbours. And above all, the rules for regulating the daily life of the individual and society were always framed with the view that they might rise higher gradually and be fitted in future for a life of perfect self-control and renunciation that are necessary for realising the Atman within or the ultimate Reality.

The outlook and consideration of human life and its different activities from the two standpoints of absolute and relative Reality enabled them to set a proper value on things and events and warded off the danger that came through an overestimate of them. Thus comprising and combining the subjective with the objective view of things, the *Pāramārthika* with the *Vyāvahārika*, the Ideal grew and became clear in men's minds. And the way, too, was found by which all kinds of Karma could

be made to lead both the individual and the community to the realisation of the goal, the super-conscious state.

Times there were when by the attractions of the flesh and the self-forgetfulness and vanity which material power and prosperity bring, the people were led astray from this ideal of life, but the Lord has always been kind to India and in His mercy has always kept His promise to the people to reincarnate Himself when needed for the re-establishment of righteousness. The Great Ones whom India has been worshipping all along as incarnations of the Deity—from the dreaded Rama with the terrible axe, to Kapila, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara and others, have every one of them appeared at such critical periods in the national life of India and have either brought the people back to the ideal of renunciation or helped them to proceed towards that Ideal by removing the hindrances that obstructed their path. Thus the ship of the national life in India had been sailing through rough and calm waters in its voyage to find the safe haven in the "eternal Rock of Ages," the absolute Reality in and beyond the universe, protected by the all-merciful hand of Providence, until the time came for its facing the roughest weather of all after the great Sankara had left its helm in other hands.

Vast and various were the evils that had entered into the body of the nation when Sankara began his reform work during the period of the downfall of Buddhism. It seems that the preachers of that religion had had to lower their ideal in many places to bring the nations with little or no ethical standard whatsoever, of Northern Asia into the fold. They had to compromise truth with half-truths, the pure light of religion and renunciation with the prevalent local customs, habits and superstitions. Thus the enormous and extensive spread of that religion was then made at the cost of its intense spirit of sacrifice for what was true and noble. The infirmities of the adherents had gradually entered the ranks of the teachers, and in time the people and the preachers of India also had been affected with the same evils by their communication with

them. Increase of intermarriage had produced among the people a great many mixed or sub-castes in different grades of development, and it became a question of time and spread of culture to weld them into one homogeneous whole. Rules were then framed for not going outside of India to prevent this medley of confusion getting worse. But they could not prevent the coming over and frequent invasions of the sturdy barbarian hordes of Chins, Huns, Sakas and the rest who had been living in Middle and Northern Asia. Many of these conquerors settled in India and made the problem of uniting the people into one nation more complex.

And before the country had time to settle those internal affairs and establish itself firmly as before on the Vedic Ideals, in came the invasion of the Yavanas or the Greeks, and a little later, of the Pathans and the Mughals. And the dark age for India was complete when during and after the downfall of the great Mughal, the supremacy of the country was partly handed over, and partly wrested from the native chiefs to and by the British Power.

Bound hand and foot, despoiled of all her wealth, power and knowledge by foreign hands, hypnotised by material power and the false glamour of the two days' material civilisation of the West, in abject misery lies she, the queen adored of nations, the mother of heroes and spiritual giants, nay, of God-men, who had rendered holy this little planet of ours by using it as their footstool—she who had helped her neighbours with religion, knowledge, both subjective and objective, and had never spread devastation and ruin in other lands in the name of conquest! And is there no hope, none whatever? And has the God of India forgotten her and His promise to her of old? The night darkened, and the bonds tightened more than ever! And sometime in 1836, in going to determine the kind of culture and education that should be given her children to enable them to free her and raise her to her former glory, it was settled that Western education, imparted through the medium of the English language,

would be the best under the circumstances! Aye, even the genius of Raja Ram Mohun Roy subscribed to introduce that foreign language, and as the Swami Vivekananda said, "helped to set the nation back for fifty years or more thereby! The country would have received the Western method of education and the objective sciences of the West in a few years, had he but translated the Western books into Sanskrit and made that language the medium of instruction."

But God in His mercy for poor India heard her prayers! And the 18th February of that same year (1836) saw the birth of that personality in a wayside village in Bengal, who by his unique realisations in the field of religion and unforeseen spiritual powers helped to convince the people of the country of the greatness of the old Indian Ideal and prevented the national bark from proceeding any further towards the rocks and sands of the materialistic civilisation of the West. Without getting any aid from the much vaunted education of modern times, he by his innate spiritual powers saw light where the best of the book-educated university-men of the day found only darkness. From the high transcendental super-conscious plane in which he passed his days, the absolute Self, God, the Soul of man, and their relation with one another, the object of creation, of human life and its activities, and the way by which that object is best fulfilled—appeared clear as things in daylight. And he used to talk about those things incessantly to all who gathered round him, in such a simple language and with such pointed similes, aphorisms and parables, that the meaning, becoming clear and palpable to everyone, would touch and carry impression into the hearts of all. We shall take the opportunity of telling you here what the Swami Vivekananda thought about this towering personality and the ideal that has been manifested in and through his godly life for the benefit of India and humanity at large.

"Many times in the past had India passed through downfalls which had left her stunned and bewildered,

and the God of India had for as many times protected and restored life and vigour into her by manifesting Himself unto her in His mercy. But those past downfalls appear light and trivial, compared with the depths to which she has fallen at present. Never had this holy land been enveloped before with such a long night of deep and dismal misery. But it is almost over now, and soon will its darkness wane before the radiant rays of dawn.

"And the re-awakening of the country will be in proportion to this unprecedented fall, and the mighty manifestation of strength and vigour of the present rise will put into insignificance all the past revivals. They will be shorn of their glory and importance as stars before the sun.

"For, to teach people the religion practised by the Aryans and to show them the common ground of unity among the apparently divided sects that, coming into existence in different times and places and with different social rules and customs, lie scattered all over the country and are quarrelling always with one another regarding the principles of religion, and yet all of which go by the common name of Hinduism—the Lord has manifested Himself again as Sri Ramakrishna. Yea, holding within himself the realisations of the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedas, the principles of which on application were found to be true for all times and places, he has appeared in this new incarnation as the living embodiment of the eternal and universal religion itself for the benefit of humanity.

"To prove that the super-conscious knowledge that is ever existent in the Lord, reveals itself always to the perfectly pure in spirit, even though devoid of all book-learning, and that the scriptures are true inasmuch as they are the records of the same, he has in this incarnation risen to that knowledge through faith in God and purity, discarding all help that any form of book-learning can give.

"In this present dispensation suited to the age

lies the source of infinite good for India, as well as for the whole world ; and the founder of it, Sri Ramakrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the great Masters of religion of the past. O man, have faith in this. . . . From the worship of the dead past we invite you to the worship of the living present."

Nowhere in the past history of the world have we come across the fact of any of the great teachers of religion trying to find out what truth there is in the various paths through which men are travelling towards the religious goals, since the dawn of religion and religious ideas in this planet of ours. Sri Ramakrishna alone had the inclination and boldness to try the same in our time, by taking initiation from the professed teachers of almost all the prevalent great religions of the world, Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity, one after another, realising the goal of one before proceeding to realise the goal of the others. And the results of his research have tolled the death-knell of all religious intolerance and bigotry that have filled men and nations with hatred towards one another.

The realisations of Sri Ramakrishna can be summed up briefly as follows—

(a) Every sincere devotee of any religion whatsoever will have to pass through the three stages of dualism, qualified monism and ultimately monism.

(b) As all jackals howl in the same pitch, so all devotees of any religion whatsoever have declared in the past and will continue to do so in future, their oneness with the Deity on realising the heights of monism.

(c) There need not be any quarrel between dualism, qualified monism and monism, for each comes in turn to every devotee in accordance with the growth and development of his spiritual life.

(d) The positive part of every religion, in which are found the way and the method of procedure through that way, as well as the goal which a sincere follower of that way would reach in the end—is true. But the negative, which speaks of punishment and damnation, eternal or

otherwise, for the straggler, is not so, being added to the former for keeping the members of the community from deserting and straying to other folds.

(e) Religion can be transmitted to others by will and touch by the great teachers.

(f) In the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedanta are to be found the eternal principles and laws that govern every single manifestation of religion in a particular time, place and environment.

(g) Stick to your own religion, and think that the followers of other religions are coming to the same goal through different paths.

Thus the Ideal suited to the age was completed after twelve long years of unheard-of struggle and renunciation, and the great Master knew that at last the time was ripe for the coming of those who would get the direct touch of his spirit and carry the Ideal everywhere in India and abroad. They came, and he knew each one of them as if he was long acquainted with them. And to the one whom he chose to make the leader of them all, when he said how he had been waiting impatiently to meet him, for he had come to know that the Divine Mother would make him the instrument to perform Her great work of uplifting India and other countries—he could not believe on account of the sceptical spirit of Western education which he had imbibed before. Strange as it is, it is not the first time that we have heard of such things about the great Masters of religion. Sankara, Chaitanya and others did the same, and Jesus not only knew his disciples, but said when he met Peter, "Upon this rock shall I build my temple!"

So the Master went on training those young men and left them in 1886, giving directions to the leader, the Swami Vivekananda, for the spread of his great message. Gentlemen, I need not enter into great details henceforth. You all know how, fired with love for their great Master and zeal for his message, this little band of young, energetic workers, without a single piece of copper in their pocket, went barefooted almost all over India,

knowing not what to eat or where to lie down, month after month and year after year ; how the great message spread itself gradually ; how in 1893 the Swami Vivekananda went to America to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; how by the inscrutable ways of the Divine Mother, the object of that august assembly was turned as it were and made to suit and serve the purpose of the advent of the Swami before the public and the glory of Hinduism ; and how winning laurel after laurel for Mother India and Hinduism in America and England, he returned to India in 1897 and started the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Swami started the Mission at first with both the lay and monastic disciples of the Master. But the former took little interest in it after a year or two, and ultimately all the work of the Mission was transferred into the hands of the monks of this Math. The Mission was started by the Swami for spreading the religious Ideal of Sri Ramakrishna by interpreting the scriptures in the light of the great Master's life and realisations and with his idea of service to humanity looking upon human beings as images of God, nay as God Himself. So preaching and philanthropic activities were the two main divisions of the Mission. But what the Swami wanted of each one of us was to do the works of those two divisions in the spirit of Karma-Yoga or perfect unselfishness by idealising not only the work itself, but the men and women also, with whom we come in contact in the course of its performance and for whom we do it, as the Deity Himself. But how to preach and teach and serve if we give up the idea that they need them? And the answer is that your scripture teaches you not only to look upon the Deity as perfect, but to do so with regard to every part of Him.

What if He has preferred to appear before you as imperfect—as sick and miserable and ignorant and starving—to give you the opportunity of getting benefited yourself by serving Him in those shapes? Thus we shall



have to do the preaching, teaching and serving in that light. It will protect us from getting vain with the idea of our importance in going to help others, and make us more and more unselfish as we go on doing the work in that spirit, and will enable us ultimately, to realise the Vedanta idea that the Universe and *every* bit of it is God and nothing but God. No work is good or bad in itself, but the motive with which we proceed to do it makes it so. The same work which brings bondage upon bondage when we proceed to do it with selfish motives, frees and makes us rise higher and higher when we do it with perfectly unselfish motives and with no idea of gain to us, even of name and fame.

Thus the Ramakrishna Mission, gentlemen, teaches us to do all works with the highest of motives. Are you a householder? Then look upon your wife and children as images of God and serve them with your whole heart. Are you a monk? Then look upon all human beings as incarnations of God and serve with all your might, and it will help you to rise to the super-conscious state. Are you a patriot? Then give up all petty jealousies and heart-burnings which limit your vision, and work incessantly to make your country really great by helping it to stand on what is true and noble. Thus to reach the super-conscious goal by renunciation and service and to help others to do the same, are what the Mission teaches every one of us. To teach men to stand firm on the Ideal that has been given to us as our precious inheritance by Sri Ramakrishna, and then to learn and apply the relative truths that the West has discovered to improve the material condition of India—are what the Mission enjoins on every one of us.

Such, gentlemen, is the Ideal of the Ramakrishna Mission, and such the ideas which it wants to work out for the good of humanity. May He whose unique spiritual life is the inspiring Ideal behind the Mission, and he who has shown us how to apply that Ideal practically into our daily lives, bless us and give us light and strength

to follow in their footsteps for the real welfare of India and our own selves.

## THE FUTURE OF BUDDHISM.

What exactly is signified by the revived interest in Buddhism all the world over? How far is it an acknowledged allegiance to its author, and how far to its doctrines and philosophies? What indeed will its future relations be in regard to other religions? These are some of the questions that the approaching thrice-blessed birthday of the Lord Buddha has evoked in our mind. It cannot be denied that this interest is daily growing in depth and extent. The educated and the thoughtful everywhere are being attracted by it, and the celebration of the anniversary, widely observed in India and abroad, shows that the interest is more than merely intellectual.

From their very first contact with Oriental learning and culture, the Western scholars, with their characteristic enthusiasm and thoroughness, had taken to the study of Buddhism together with that of Vedic literature and philosophy. And we confess, though to our evident shame, that the greater part of the intellectual basis of the Buddhistic revival is owing to the noble efforts of those Western savants. The Pali Text Society, The Sacred Books of the East Series, The Sacred Books of the Buddhist Series, The Harvard Oriental Series, The German Pali Text Society and similar other societies are concrete symbols of their genuine interest and perseverance in the service of the religion of the Buddha. We must mention in this connection also the preachings of the early theosophists, for the revival is at least partly owing to them, and that beautiful and well-renowned poem, *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold.

In India, the birthplace of Buddhism, the growing influence is traceable; besides the Theosophical Society,

also to the unique attitude of Swami Vivekananda towards the Lord Buddha, and his original and correct interpretation of the true relations of Buddhism to Hinduism. Whoever have gone through the life and teachings of the Swami, cannot but be struck with his wonderful love and devotion for the Compassionate One. Even as early as his student days he had a vision of the Lord, which left a deep and indelible impression on his life. A disciple writes: "That was a great hour indeed, when he spoke of Buddha ; for, catching a word that seemed to identify him with its anti-Brahmanical spirit, an uncomprehending listener said, 'Why Swami, I did not know that you were a Buddhist!' 'Madam,' he said rounding on her, his whole face aglow with the inspiration of that name, 'I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha. Who was there ever like Him?—the Lord—who never performed one action for Himself—with a heart that embraced the whole world! So full of pity that He—prince and monk—would give His life to save a little goat! So loving that He sacrificed Himself to the hunger of a tigress!—to the hospitality of a pariah and blessed him! And He came into my room when I was a boy, and I fell at His feet! For I knew it was the Lord Himself!'" The same disciple tells us again: "May one of them never forget a certain day of consecration, in the chapel at the monastery, when, as the opening step in a life-time, so to speak, he first taught her to perform the worship of Siva, and then made the whole culminate in an offering of flowers at the feet of the Buddha! 'Go thou,' he said, as if addressing in one person each separate soul that would ever come to him for guidance, 'and follow Him, who was born and gave His life for others *five hundred times*, before He attained the vision of the Buddha!'" To many of us, Swami Vivekananda almost appears to have taken up the work initiated by Buddha among humanity, from where the declining Buddhism left it. Did not Swamiji declare many a time that the idea for which Buddha lived can be properly practised and

realised only now, and that the disciples had frustrated by their imperfect understanding the purpose of the Master? Anyhow, it is certain that if the religion of the Buddha comes again to occupy a distinctive place in the worship of India, it will be not a little due to the synthetic influence of the great Swami.

To many the religion of the Buddha signifies the denial and repudiation of Hinduism, as if they were rival churches without an underlying unity. This rivalry of religions is an idea which is absolutely foreign to the Indian mind. Divergent philosophies there were, and correspondingly different practices. But all these, in spite of their philosophical quarrels, were considered equally valid means of realising the life's ideal and as such valued components of the One Eternal Religion. In this light only the mutual relation of Hinduism and Buddhism can be correctly seen. The idea of their mutual exclusiveness is, we are afraid, of modern and foreign origin. The ancient vision is to-day clouded by confused understanding and ignorance. True to our intellectual vassalage to the West, we have swallowed this intellectual morsel unsalted, and have consequently to witness the sight of daughters aggressively asserting themselves against the Mother Church, as if in their Mother's house they have not room enough to live and grow freely to their full statures! Nothing could be more erroneous and suicidal. The vision of the Re-nascent Hinduism, synthetic and all-comprehensive, reclaiming her lost provinces and assimilating new ones, is, alas, yet enveloped in thick darkness for the mass of our educated countrymen!

What indeed shall be the form of the revived Buddhism? Will it grow up as a separate dominant creed? Do we hope that its apparently atheistic philosophy will dominate human mind again? Nothing of the kind, we are afraid, is going to happen. We are inclined to believe that however subtle and logical the Buddhistic philosophies may be, the Time-spirit is against them. Two reasons may be indicated generally.

First, this is pre-eminently the age of science, and science is decidedly positive in its outlook and ontological implications, which Buddhistic doctrines are not. Secondly, man is by nature averse to negations and as such unwilling to welcome negative philosophic prospects. Of this more later on. Not with the philosophies that pass in his name, then, can the Buddha sway again the heart of mankind. Sankara has a better chance in this respect. It is the wonderful *life* of the Compassionate One, its human appeal, its battle-cry of renunciation and spiritual emancipation, and its great compassionate motif that are going to reconquer the lost dominions. In order to derive the greatest benefit from the growing interest in Buddhism, it is necessary therefore to learn to understand the Buddha as distinguished from his doctrines and philosophies, and we are glad that some at least are slowly veering round to that point of view.

A fairly large volume containing 550 pages, nicely printed and bound in yellow cloth, with yellow top, so reminiscent of the yellow garb of the Buddhist monk, has been lying on our table for some time. *The Doctrine of the Buddha\** is replete with interesting materials, and though slightly lacking in elegance of style, grips the interest of the reader by the sincere earnestness of its appeal. It is no wonder "that the German (original) edition of the work has aroused the keenest interest, as well in scientific circles as among the general public, and already in the few years that have passed since its first publication, fourteen editions have been necessary to meet the great demand for it." The present English edition has been prepared by the author himself with the assistance of an English scholar and is said to contain some entirely new matter. The bulk of the book consists of a lucid and comprehensive delineation of the Four Most Excellent Truths. He purposely eschews Buddhist metaphysics, which in-

\* *The Doctrine of the Buddha*.—The Religion of Reason, by George Grimm. Published by the Offizin W. Drugulin, Leipzig. Price, Sh. 15.

dicates that the author has a clear idea of its relative unimportance in the present age. He rightly observes: ". . . Much greater sinners in this direction as regards the determining of the *original* Buddha-doctrine have been, for many centuries, nay, actually for two millenniums the Buddhist monks of Asia; and sinners in this direction particularly, they still are to-day. Among them the Abhidhamma, indeed, the Milindapanha, and the yet later actual commentaries are worshipped as the acme of the highest wisdom, with such a reverence, nay, with such an inexhaustible enthusiasm, that, in the end, one might easily quite forget that in addition to the authors of this *exegetical* literature there also once lived a *Buddha*. . . Why... do you need an Abhidhamma? Why a Buddhaghosa? Why all the other commentators when you would have the Buddha-word in the *original*? Does not Buddha suffice you? . . . Has the Abhidhamma yet begotten any saints at all? . . . To-day, the Southern Buddhism has fallen so low that it expressly forbids its monks to try to lay hold of the teaching of the Buddha by the exercise of their own powers of understanding. The 'collective opinion' of the Three Councils, the so-called Theravāda-interpretation, as it is preserved in the Island of *Lanka* (Ceylon), is the sole standard of truth. . . As well the Northern as the Southern Buddhism of Asia are . . . *independent developments* of the original teachings of the Buddha which already had set in not very long after his death."

In contrast thereto, the author claims to have set forth in the present work the *original* genuine teachings of Buddha. The work is built exclusively upon the sayings of Buddha himself and his leading disciples who lived contemporaneously with him; and this confers a special value on the book inasmuch as thereby it has become a fine anthology of the most noteworthy passages from the Buddhist Canon.

We are quite one with the author in his rejecting the later metaphysical developments and reversion to

the original doctrines of the Buddha. This indeed should be the attitude of one who would be of service to the religion of the Lord as well as the modern world. But in our opinion the author does not go far enough. There is no dearth of ideas, philosophies or doctrines in the world at the present time. It is not want of logic in the existing systems, which has made the modern man irreligious. It is the vision of life that is wanting. What the world needs to-day is a few lives which shall stand before it as the living demonstrations of the truths and ideals that religion has been preaching from times immemorial. And the life of the Buddha is such an one. Therefore it is his *life* and *character* as distinguished from his doctrines, that should be upheld before mankind. They alone have a universal appeal.

Some there are who seem to entertain the belief that the revival of Buddhism will come about by supplanting other religions. We need not say that it is only a fond delusion. Old creeds do not generally revive in any extensive scale, even as past history does not exactly repeat itself. This militant attitude therefore is neither wise nor fruitful. The other day we came across a protest against this attitude in the February issue of *The Young East* (Japan) from a Boston lady who observes: "There is one tendency, I notice, in the magazine *The Young East* on the part of some of the writers and also to a certain extent in the statement of the purpose of the magazine, that troubles me a little. It is this. The putting forth of the idea in any form that Buddhism only can save the world. To say this in any way or form seems to me an error likely to wreck the spiritual contribution Japan could make to the world." Thus though as a creed Buddhism may not be much in request, it is undeniable that the character of the Lord Buddha will again receive in India and elsewhere the loving homage of innumerable souls, more and more as days pass on.

As an embodiment of the universal ideal of spiritual life, as the ideal modern man, rational, masculine and infinitely compassionate, "the greatest of Aryans", "the

one absolutely sane," shall he reign in the hearts of men and find a place in all spiritual visions of life. There is an eternal element in the life of the Lord Buddha whose appeal is for all times. His compassion and love for all living beings, his strong and deep yearning for the realisation of Truth, the Saving Truth that heals the wounds of the suffering worlds, his practical outlook which makes directly at the essentials of life, silently passing over all theoretical accretions, and above all, his original and wonderful contribution to the spiritual ideal by making it fruitful in the loving service of all beings,—all these have an irresistible charm for the modern man. Not the nice philosophical disquisitions of his followers, but the human appeal of his own life it was that carried Buddhism over lands far and wide, as a supreme consolation to the people everywhere and "far and near, in homes of men there spread an unknown peace." It is this humanism mainly that has roused again the interest of mankind in the present age. This wonderful character of the man and not the philosophy blessed by his name, that shall ever be the object of our loving homage and worship. And the Buddha, as he himself declared, was not a person, but a realisation to which any one might attain. This realisation indeed can come through any religion and philosophy, not merely through the orthodox Buddhist practices and philosophies. It is in this spirit that we welcome the revival of Buddhism and consider the contributions of Buddhism necessary for the revival of Hinduism. "The heart of Buddha and the intellect of Sankaracharya,"—was not that always Swami Vivekananda's definition of the future of Hinduism and the highest possibility of humanity?

Not as a separate creed then, but as a universal element in all spiritual visions of life, shall Buddhism come up again. "Many a house of life hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought these prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught; sore was my ceaseless strife! But now, thou builder of this Tabernacle—thou! I know thee! Never shalt thou build again these walls of pain,



nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay fresh rafters on the clay ; broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split ! Delusion fashioned it ! Safe pass I thence—Deliverance to obtain." It is the fiery spirit that lay behind these words that is again attracting humanity. Men are again feeling the spell of that infinitely loving heart that felt itself one in sympathy and compassion even with the plant-life. "May all beings be full of happiness and secure ! May they all be happy ! Whatever there are of living beings, whether they move or are bound in their place, whether they are weak or strong, whether long or short, whether big or small, whether medium of size, or slim or stout, whether visible or invisible, whether near or far, whether now in life or longing to come into life, may they all be happy ! As a mother protects her only child with her own life, cultivate such boundless love towards all beings ! "

His spirit shall permeate all lands and peoples, and his influence shall be like unto the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers everywhere. His mission, so far as we can understand, was at no time a credal aggression. He came to fulfil, not to destroy. He discovered the knowledge which when he came was circumscribed among the few and was grown over with meaningless practices and theoretical accretions, and spread it broadcast among the people. He directed men's attention to the fundamentals of life. He never indulged in criticisms of philosophical systems and was silent on those tenets which to many are a potent source of confusion and misapprehension. He emphasised the practical aspects of the spiritual life and showed its bearings on social and collective life. He gave it a new turn that it might yield a rich harvest in fruitful service instead of losing itself in the intricacies of ritualism.

But we must not forget that the ideal preached by the Buddha was identical with the Vedantic ideal, and that only its philosophical presentation was different. The psychological analysis on which he based his

practical teachings was not exactly that of the Vedantic teachers. The reason of this difference was that, desiring to avoid all controversy on the supersensuous and the transcendental, he conceived life and reality only in their phenomenal aspect in opposition to the noumenal view-point of the Vedanta. He represented them even as they seem on the surface, eternally changing and full of suffering. By itself this outlook was not calculated to much impress the people. But three other factors gave it a strong support. First, its practical implication,—the cessation of sorrow, a goal covetable to one and all. Secondly, the Buddha's open and bold declaration that Nirvana and the Knowledge of Truth were equally for all, irrespective of caste or colour, which ushered in the dawn of a new social and religious freedom for the people. And thirdly, the life of the Buddha himself and its message of service, compassion and love. This last element is the very core and essence of Buddhism. Whatever degree of unreality there was in the philosophical ideal was more than counterbalanced by the tremendous appeal of the sublime character of the Buddha. That life was not nothing. It was on the other hand an eloquent witness of a superior life and reality. And in the light of the appeal of that life in favour of service and universal love, the world philosophically conceived as evanescent and illusory, became the most real of all realities as the very person of the Lord of salvation. In this way life was made real, the world real, service of man real, and the widest commonalty established. Now this also is exactly the objective of the Vedanta, only its interpretations are different. While Buddhism started with "many" as the real, denying the existence of the "one," the Vedanta stood on the truth of the "one" as the real and considered the "many" as illusory. But both arrived at the same point where the service and love of men adorned the threshold of the Hall of the Ultimate. Thus Renunciation and Service,—the two eternal ideals of Hinduism found a new inspiration through the life

and teachings of the Buddha. It was no new "ism" that he promulgated. He was the fulfiller of Hinduism, and as such we offer our soul's worship at his blessed feet.

## THE BASIC IDEA OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.\*

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA.

You have heard a good deal about the ideas, ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. As I do not presume to be able to hold your attention for a long time on the subject, I shall say only a few words in connection with the basic idea which this Mission is trying to work out according to its humble capacity.

Let me begin by drawing your attention to an interesting phenomenon of the history of human civilisation. Out of the human race have evolved two different types of *Supermen*—the Monster-man and the God-man. The Monster-man says, 'The world is for me ;' the God-man says, 'I am for the world.' The one says, 'The weak must be sacrificed for the strong ;' while the other says, 'The strong must be sacrificed for the weak.' The Monster-man says, 'Might is right ;' the God-man says, 'Righteousness is might.'

Indeed, these two types of *Supermen* have furnished humanity with two different paths. When the ideal of the God-man captures the imagination of the human race or a section thereof, civilisation advances, wholly or partially, in the path of love and sacrifice, and there is peace, individual as well as collective. When the other ideal holds its sway, the path of civilisation is marked by fight, and there is unrest, individual as well as collective.

\* A speech delivered at the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention.

The modern world has almost thrown overboard the ideal of the God-man. The Monster-man is its avowed ideal. Buddha, Christ, Sankara, Muhammad have all been thrown to the background ; they are being preserved like so many interesting specimens of fossils for antiquarian research. Their commandments have all been swept aside, as they have been found to be incompatible with the tastes and requirements of modern society.

Modern culture aims at developing the intellect, but it has no eye upon chastening the heart which is left under the sway of brute instincts. Selfishness, jealousy, anger, hatred, and lust for power and possession rule the modern man. Intellect has advanced, science, art, industries, and commerce have made a headway, but they are manipulated for aggrandising the strong and exploiting the weak—simply because man in spite of his boasted culture has remained a weakling helplessly swayed by brute impulses of greed and ferocity. A gigantic brain worked by a brute mind makes a monster ; and modern society is seized with the ambition of producing monsters. But, alas, monsters cannot bring peace either to themselves or to the world !

The watchword of modern civilisation is *survival of the fittest*. This is a law taken from brute life. Man is about to forget the fact that he differs widely from the brutes. The brutes cannot sow, nor can they weave ; the brutes cannot increase their efficiency, nor can they reduce their wants ; so they struggle for their existence, and they feel no moral scruple in suppressing the weak. They have no demand for spiritual growth, and so they require no lesson on self-sacrifice. It is the prerogative of man to evolve spiritually towards the ideal of God-man by obeying the *law of love and sacrifice*. It is the prerogative of man to taste the transcendental bliss of spiritual growth that love and sacrifice do always bring in their train. It is the prerogative of man to ask for the pardon of those who have fixed him on the cross. The brutes cannot do this—they do not produce a Buddha or a Christ. So, for man the law of real evolution is the

law of renunciation and service. But, alas, modern society has pinned its faith on the brute. It is bent upon preserving brute instincts and brute laws on the human plane. This is why there is so much fraud and strife, unrest and agony all over the world.

Now, what is the remedy? What will solve the fundamental problem of the world's sufferings? What will wash off the bad blood that has been created between Labour and Capital, the ruler and the ruled, the coloured races and the white, between different sects, different communities and different nations? The solution is simple. Humanity has to shift its angle of vision from the ideal of the Monster-man to that of the God-man. Man has to replace the brute doctrine of the survival of the fittest by the divine law of love and sacrifice—renunciation and service. Humanity for its peace, nay for its very existence, has to accept the motto of "serving the weak, the down-trodden as Narayana, as divinity." This is no cant for a handful of Sannyasins, but a working formula for the whole world to readjust its affairs—a watchword for the right type of human civilisation. This is the solution. But our fascination for the wrong ideal is too strong! The right path of peace and progress is hidden from our vision!

At this grave crisis of human civilisation, another God-man has appeared on the scene to attract our vision towards the path illuminated by a galaxy of God-men that the world has produced. The ideals of faith and purity, truth and sincerity, love and sacrifice have again blazed forth in all their splendour in Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who stands like a pillar of fire showing the right path to erring humanity.

It is in the hallowed name of this God-man that this Mission is standing meekly to whisper into the ears of men the message that they have to accept the ideal of the God-man, they have to obey the law of renunciation and service and adjust their affairs accordingly—otherwise peace individual or collective will remain an absurd dream. This Mission is standing here with the banner

of renunciation and service, to serve the world with India's offerings of spiritual ideas and ideals which have been required urgently for the redress of human sufferings all over the world and for bringing about a greater renaissance for which the world is waiting.

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### TO NANDA DEVI.\*

BY D. RUTTLEDGE.

I was a mortal  
 In a lonely world,  
 That went about just  
 As a chrysalis might,  
 Wrapt round in gloomy doubt.  
 My brows were puckered,  
 And mine eyes were dull,  
 My shoulders loaded  
 With perplexities.  
 At last I spied thee,  
 And with quickened step  
 To lay my sins down  
 Hastened to thy feet.  
 With sobs that choked me  
 And with tear-drowned eyes,  
 I drew them forth and  
 Laid them one by one,  
 Self-consciousness and  
 Limitation laid,  
 And criticism  
 Of another's way.  
 Fear of his thought and  
 Fear too of mine own.  
 Thou didst not change, but  
 Just a mighty voice

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\* One of the highest and most sublime peaks of the Himalayas visible from the Adwaita Ashrama, Mayavati.—EDITOR, P. B.

As of the blast that  
Strikes the enduring rock  
Pealed from on high and  
Cried: "These are not *thou*,  
Rise up and be *thy-*  
*Self*." Astounded, I  
Was raised a little  
Then, and saw beyond  
The crys'lis wall of self—  
The world laid out as  
In some great design.  
Each nation and each  
Kingdom had its place,  
Like notes of music  
In a glorious scale:  
The Life of God the  
Melody therein.  
I am awake and  
Will no longer bear  
The burden of  
A self-made tyranny.

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## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CONVENTION.

BY AN OBSERVER

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention held at the Belur Math during the first week of April, the first of its kind in the annals of the Order, was a unique affair, whose importance may be attributed to more reasons than one. Graced and blessed by almost all the living disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, the occasion afforded an opportunity for the representatives of the Math and Mission from far and near to congregate together at their headquarters. About 90 centres of the Order from Mayavati to Jaffna and Bombay to Assam as also from the United States of America were represented. The Math wore a picturesque appearance with the ochre robes

and white dresses of about 200 monks and Brahmacharins. Members representing the various philanthropic, educational, preaching and publication departments of the organisation sat together and discussed only to find that their apparently diverse items of work converged to one ideal only, viz., the realisation of Truth through different channels of activities. People speaking different languages—Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujrati, Hindi, Malayalam, Assamese and English—created a polyglot tongue which gave expression to one ideal alone—the grand ideal realised by Sri Ramakrishna and interpreted by Swami Vivekananda. It was really a great sight to see how various communities that have otherwise very little in common in them could unite on the common platform of spirituality. The Convention meeting under the shadow of the Belur Math, which, as Swamiji emphatically prophesied, would supply spiritual food to the world for at least 500 years to come, gave ample inkling of the future development of the Order that would by its benign influence enable the different communities of the country to discover their national unity based on religion, and ultimately usher in a new age for the world by preaching the ideal of toleration and love, urging every one to work without malice and hatred.

The programme of the Convention, which sat for eight days, was a heavy and varied one. Learned discourses were given on the ideals of the Hindu religion and philosophy as well as on the social service and contagious diseases and their prevention by experts. Bhajan and music attracted as much attention of the people as the athletic shows and muscle displays. All these items left an indelible impression upon the minds of the visitors. An observer could not but be struck with the discovery that the cult of the future would make room for all healthy activities, eschewing none and embracing all, and it would attune even the grossest secular work to the highest verity and practicalise the sacerdotal ideals by fitting them to the actualities of the human life.



The various public meetings held under the auspices of the Convention were all well-attended. The public evinced a keen interest in the deliberations. Eminent monks of the Order read their papers and delivered their speeches. Every one carefully demonstrated how the ideal of religion as interpreted by the life of Sri Ramakrishna was, instead of being a dreamy unreality, a concern of the living reality of human life. Apart from the speeches of the President and the Secretary of the Mission, the paper read by Principal Kamakhya Nath Mitra of Faridpur dealing with the ideals, ideas and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission evoked universal applause.

An outside observer is not expected to know anything that might happen behind the screen. But that outwardly the Convention breathed a spirit of love, toleration and creative ideals may be admitted without any fear of dispute. No event happened to mar the harmony of the occasion by creating a rift in the lute.

The reports of the activities of over a hundred centres controlled and managed by the Ramakrishna Order, read at the representatives' gathering, demonstrated the expansion of its activities among all classes, sections and communities of people. They proved how silently and steadily the Order has been spreading its influence throughout the length and breadth of the country, and how fast it is being recognised as one of the few institutions that would, keeping themselves aloof from the feverish and tempestuous agitation of the time, ultimately help in the birth of the renaissance India. Taking advantage of the occasion, workers of the different centres compared notes with one another regarding their respective success or failure, and all, it seemed, felt the necessity for consolidating their work, keeping a vigilant eye upon its progress that extensity might not be achieved at the cost of intensity, and that in the development of the activities the real spirit of Swamiji's Karma-Yoga might not be lost sight of.

In a series of conversazioni held generally in the

evening after the day's work was over, the senior Swamis of the Order gave opportunities to the representatives and visitors to have their doubts solved regarding various problems of work and religion. Swamis Shivananda, Saradananda, Vijnanananda, Akhandananda, Subodhananda and Nirmalananda—all of whom had sat at the feet of the Master for longer and shorter periods—created, each in his own way, an impression upon the minds of the younger members, which has surely proved of inestimable value to them. These informal meetings were a prominent feature of the Convention, and many confessed that they might not have a similar experience in their life-time again. The blessings of the elders, their encouragement and admonition, and words of caution and advice were the greatest incentive to not a few workers. More than writings and speeches, these revered elders represented the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna and threw new light on many an unilluminated aspect of our life.

By a curious irony of fate, while various speakers were preaching the unity and harmony of religions and exhorting all to foster a spirit of mutual love and toleration on the Convention grounds, the metropolis on the other side of the Ganges was witnessing great orgy of murder, assassination, incendiarism and destruction of property owing to the deeds of religious fanatics among the Hindus and Muhammedans. While speaker after speaker explained the gospel of love and service in the public meetings here, the Calcutta mob, gone beyond the bounds of control, exhibited the worst fury of hatred, jealousy and other beastly propensities. In the Convention Swami Saradananda sounded a note of warning. "If all of you," said he in one of the public meetings, "had tried to practise toleration by following in the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna and spread its contagion among the classes and masses, Calcutta to-day would have been spared such blood-curdiing events. Reconciliation between different communities of India will never be affected by mere inter-dining and exchange of social

courtesies or considerations of political expediency. Only a proper understanding and practical application of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna can bring about this happy consummation." He exhorted everyone to understand the responsibility resting upon his shoulders and consecrate his life and soul to the discharge of it.

The Convention is over. Many of the representatives have gone back to their respective centres with its happy memory. The very fact of the meeting together of so many consecrated souls was a source of great inspiration and enlightenment to all. The consciousness of the serious responsibilities that they would be called upon to bear in life has set them a-thinking. All the members who met on the occasion realised it as a great privilege in their life. Such Conventions are by no means unprecedented things in the religious history of the world. The synods of the early Christians and the Councils of the Buddhistic monks are great events of history, which consolidated their respective religions on sound and secure bases. The direct results of the early Buddhistic Councils were the systematisation of the teachings of Buddha in the form of the *Tripitaka* and the despatch of Bhikshus to the various countries of Asia for the preaching of the ethical religion propounded by the Enlightened One. The effect of such a wise step as a great leaven for shaping the civilisation of the world is keenly felt even to-day. The meetings added a fresh vigour to the life of Buddhism. Similarly, perhaps, in one such convention of the Christian clergymen, the four gospels were systematised and recognised, many of the spurious teachings ascribed to Christ having been set aside as apocryphal.

We do not know what the result of the present Convention will be for the future guidance of the Ramakrishna Order. It is yet too early to hazard any prophecy regarding its future development. But that it met under a great blessing and that its atmosphere vibrated with an unspeakable sweetness cannot be denied. Swami Shivananda, while giving his final blessings to the mem-

bers on the concluding day, asked all to consecrate their life for tearing off the bondage of ignorance which alone could enable them to be happy instruments for the service of humanity. Swami Saradananda on the same occasion said that no one must think that the Convention was over with the dispersing of the representatives to their local centres of activity, but that all should from day to day try to find out how far they were able to carry out in life the teachings of this august meeting till they might compare notes again at the next Convention by taking a retrospective view of the work done during the intervening years.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

(ENGLISH)

**RHYTHM OF LIFE.**—By Swami Paramananda. Published and for sale by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 112. Price: Flexible binding \$2.00; cloth \$1.50.

This is a book of poems written in free verse. It is the third volume of the "Poetry Series" and will, we hope, like the previous ones, be appreciated by many. It contains some of the noblest sentiments of human idealism clothed in simple and beautiful English, at once spontaneous and heart-reaching. It is a record of the deeper and subtler experiences of a devotee in his struggles for the realisation of God—a book of prayer.

As has been mentioned in the "Foreword," we find, as we read the poems, "emotion and thought well forth in subtle rightness of rhythm like the rhythm that pulses through all harmony and order." The different poems have been written in different moods giving expression to varied sentiments.

The book will be a source of strength, peace and joy to many struggling spiritual aspirants. There is a

robust optimism throughout the whole book as the following lines will show :

“Sail thy vessel on,—

Steady, friend, steadily sail along.

Water may be rough

Or water may be smooth ;

But ever hold fast to thy compass.

The sky may smile

Or the sky may frown—

Hold fast to thy compass

Wind may roar

Or wind may be still—

Hold fast, hold fast to thy compass and

sail thy vessel on.

Steady, friend, steadily sail along.”

The get-up and printing of the book are superb.

**CIVILIZATION AND SPIRITUALIZATION.**—By Swami Paramananda. Published by the Vedanta Centre, 176, Marlboro Street, Boston, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 12. Price : 10 c each, \$1.00 a dozen.

Man is immensely superior to a beast because of the nobler and sublimer instincts he has. Civilisation therefore is an outlook upon life that aims at the fuller expression of man—his divine potentialities. But, as we find nowadays, there are people who make a travesty of civilisation by identifying it with a scheme of life that is debasing and demoralising. For, it is a fact that in the name of scientific improvement and efficiency some of the foremost nations of the world have let loose the animal instincts of the human nature and made a hell of this earth. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that we should have a clear idea of civilisation, which the author tries to give in this pamphlet.

**VEDIC CHRONOLOGY AND VEDANGA JYOTISHA.**—By Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B.A., LL.B. Published by Messrs. Tilak Brothers, Gaikwar Wada, Poona City. Pp. 174. Price Rs. 3/-.

The book under review is a collection of several

essays, some disjointed notes and the synopsis of a contemplated treatise on the Vedic Chronology. The contents are interesting: (1) Vedic Chronology, (2) Synopsis of the whole Book, (3) A Note on a Rig-Vedic Text, (4) The Vedanga Jyotisha, (5) A Missing Verse in the Sankhya Kârikâs, (6) Chaldean and Indian Vedas, and (7) Extracts from a Rough Note Book.

"The Vedic Chronology," intended as an elaboration of the theme of "Orion," was written only up to its second chapter; and if completed, would surely have been a valuable addition to Indian archæological literature. "The Vedanga Jyotisha" appears to have been written during the author's incarceration in the Mandalay Jail. "A Missing Verse in the Sankhya Kârikâs" originally appeared in *Sanskrit Research* in Oct., 1915; and "Chaldean and Indian Vedas" was contributed to the *Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume* in July, 1917. All these, it is needless to mention, evince great erudition and scholarship, wealth of information as well as originality of thought, and bear an eloquent testimony to the versatility of Lokamanya's genius. One wonders at the capacity of a mind which being in the very vortex of an all-India political movement, could at the same time apply itself to the hard task of archæological research.

The book sadly lacks a preface by the publishers. It is excellent in printing and get-up and contains a picture of Lokamanya Tilak and several other illustrations.

RELEASE.—By C. Jinarajadasa. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 102. Price Re. 1.

This nice little brochure, dedicated to the Divine Children who have been, who are and who shall be, is a mystical representation of the spiritual life. Release by which name the book has been called is the be-all and end-all of human endeavours, and the scriptures of the world furnish accounts of the many effective ways for its attainment. In the booklet before us the author has symbolically spoken of the well-known paths of love,

light and law which correspond to Bhakti-Yoga, Jnana-Yoga and Karma-Yoga respectively of the Hindus. The struggles of the spiritual life have also been briefly hinted at. The style of the writer is simple and beautiful.

IN QUEST OF GOD.—By Ramdas. Published by P. Ganesh Rau, Gaurimutt Street, Mangalore, South India. Pp. 167 and XXIII. Price As. 8.

This is a booklet depicting the experiences of a spiritual aspirant. It appears that Swami Ramdas who is the author as well as the subject of the book has travelled wide and visited many places of pilgrimage in quest of God. The experiences recorded are no doubt interesting. There is a portrait of the Swami at the beginning of the book.

(BENGALI)

CHHELEDER TOLOSTOY (Boys' Tolstoy).—By Akshay Kumar Roy, B.A., B.T. Published by the Ripon Library, Dacca. Pp. 130. Price As. 8.

The book is an adaptation in Bengali of thirteen famous tales of Tolstoy, done in a beautiful manner. It is prefaced by a short sketch of Tolstoy's life, and is intended for the edification of boys. It is superfluous to say anything in commendation of the original tales. They hold a unique place in the realm of short stories and have that in them which is the characteristic of all scriptural stories,—the fragrance and simple charm of the eternal verities. The author who has done the translation so beautifully, deserves all thanks for bringing them within the easy reach of the Bengali boys. The printing and get-up are good.

BHARATER DAVI (India's Demands).—By Nalini Kishore Guha. Published by the Calcutta Publishers, 90/7-A, Harrison Road, Calcutta. Pp. 73. Price As. 12.

This nicely got-up book is a collection of seven essays dealing with some of the fundamentals of national requirement, written in a terse but lucid style. "India's

**Demands," "The Strong Man," "Nationalism Vs. Communalism,"**—such are some of his subjects. The writer's main theme is strength, self-confidence and self-reliance, without which, the writer rightly affirms, all efforts at nation-building will be futile. We congratulate the author on his thoughtful production.

**BHARATER NAVA JANMA.**—By Aurobindo Ghosh. Published by the Calcutta Publishers, 90/7-A, Harrison Road, Calcutta. Pp. 108. Price Rs. 1/4/-.

The present volume is a translation of the author's original work "Renaissance in India," and it shows how India is now passing through the days of renaissance. The word renaissance with regard to India is, however, loosely used. For, unlike in Europe, where it means the subversion of the old civilisation by Greek and Roman cultures, in India it means that the country is after a long period of darkness getting back her self-consciousness. The author indicates how many of the present-day movements fail because they do not touch the centre of India's life, which according to him, is spirituality. Those who cannot as yet believe it because of the spell of the West will find enough food for thought in the book.

(SANSKRIT)

**SRI-LAKSHMANA-PARINAYAM.**—By Kavichandra Pandit Bhuvaneshwar Ratha Sarma. Published by the Manager of the Radha-Priya Trustee Fund. Pp. 412. Price not mentioned.

The book under review is a Sanskrit epic in nine cantos. It was written, we are told in the preface, mainly in compliance with the requirements of a certain Trust in prospect of a monetary reward. The poem describes elaborately the marriage of Sri Krishna with Lakshmanâ, daughter of Brihatsena, King of Madra. Though the execution of the poem does not reach the height of excellence which characterises a work of art, yet the author shows considerable knowledge and skill in the manipulation of the sacred language and its rhetoric. It is these



Pandits, neglected by the intelligentsia, who are keeping the lamp of Sanskrit learning still alight with their unrequited zeal and devotion, and are entitled to all thanks from those who believe in the necessity of the revival of Sanskrit learning and literature. The poem is printed in clear and large Devnagri types and is accompanied with a commentary composed by the author himself.

(HINDI)

**BHARAT-PREMI** (A Lover of India).—By Bhagavat Prasad Sukla. Published by the authqr from Budhbhari Pura, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 98. Price As. 12.

This is a novel, the first publication of the *Bhagavat-Works Series*, depicting the adventurous career of a patriotic young man. As has been mentioned in the preface, the writer is a novice in the field and deserves encouragement. The paper and printing of the book ought to have been better.

**ARABINDA-PATRAVALI** (Letters of Arabinda).—Translated by Prabhat Kumar Banerjee and Sanjib Kumar Chatterjee. Published by the Hindi Grantha Prakashak Samity, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 45. Price As. 6.

A collection of letters written by Sri Arabinda. As one goes through these letters, one catches a glimpse of Arabinda's lofty spiritual outlook as well as his conception of the Indian nationalism. The translation has been tolerably good.

**NAKAD-DHARMA** (Religion in Practice).—Translated by Syamlal Vaisya. Published by the Ramtirtha-Vivekananda Karyalaya, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 37.

This is a translation of a lecture delivered by Swami Ramtirtha. It is an interesting lecture wherein the Swami defines religion and brings out its real significance. Besides, he narrates therein one or two experiences of his in Japan and America and gives some valuable sugges-

tions for the regeneration of India. The translation has been free but faithful to the spirit of the original.

VEDANTA.—Translated by Surajlal Jain, Editor, Jain Prabhāt. Published by the Ramtirtha-Vivekananda Karyalaya, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 28. Price As. 2.

As the title itself shows, this is a pamphlet containing a lecture on Vedanta. While in San Francisco Swami Ramtirtha delivered this lecture. As the Swami was a man who tried to live in life the principles he inculcated, his words have a value of their own. So his lectures and writings have been appreciated by many.

AMAR-KATHA.—Translated by Lakshmi Narayanji Gupta, Vakil, Sahjehanpur. Published by the Yogashrama, Kirthpur, Dt. Hoshiarpur (Punjab). Pp. 82. Price As. 12.

A treatise on Adwaita Vedanta dealing with the subject in a popular manner. The author is Swami Dayalji Atmadarshi, a Yogi. The translation of the book has not been very satisfactory, and the paper and printing are not also good.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER CONVENTION.

Elsewhere are recorded the impressions of a visitor to the Convention of the Ramakrishna Order, held, as we had notified in our March issue, at the Belur Math, Calcutta, during the first week of April. The Convention, it may be said, was a complete and all round success. A varied and interesting programme was gone through during the eight days that the Convention was in session, consisting of public lectures on the ideas and ideals of the Mission as well as on philosophy and religion in the light of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and also on sanitation so much needed in Bengal and elsewhere.

There was besides the reading of the reports of the various Math and Mission centres and of unaffiliated works, guided by the Order. There were music and sports and various informal discussions.

Never before in the history of the Order has there been such a unique gathering of monks and workers from all the quarters of India and abroad, and there was naturally a mighty upheaval of joy. Every one felt uplifted, and many went back with lasting impressions of the Living Ideal, with clearer ideas and much better understanding. The Convention, we believe, was not held a day too soon. The Order has grown considerably in extent and responsibilities, and a comparing of notes by the different centres was an urgent desideratum. There was further the necessity of closer co-ordination of the various aspects of the work for a better and more organised fulfilment of its duties.

The Mission, as Swami Saradananda, secretary to the Reception Committee observed in his address of welcome, has passed through the two first stages of public opposition and indifference and is now generally accepted and respected. Now is the time for greater caution and more alert attention to the maintenance of the ideal of the Order pure and unmitigated. One is confident that the measures devised by the Convention and specially the free and earnest discussion will go a great way towards guarding the Order against being toned down and losing in intensity in its quest for expansion and popularity.

### HOW ITALIANS UNDERSTAND INDIA.

The great interest that is taken in Italy about India and her culture can be clearly seen from the writings and discourses of the two Italian professors—Signor Carlo Formichi and Dr. Giuseppe Tucci, who arrived at Santiniketan, Bolpur, some time back.\* Professor Formichi is a great scholar of Sanskrit and has been teaching the subject for twenty-five years in Italy. Dr. Tucci, who

\* He has since returned to Italy.—EDITOR, P. B.

was formerly a student of Professor Formichi, is not only a great scholar in Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, but knows Chinese and Tibetan as well. To the effort of these savants it is due that in recent years a great interest has been aroused amongst young Italians in Sanskrit and other Indian lores. At present there is quite a number of Sanskritists in Italy, which has got, of all the countries of Europe, the greatest number of chairs of Sanskrit with a professor of Indology in every faculty of letters.

In an address which Professor Formichi gave on his arrival at Bolpur, and the full text of which appeared in *The Modern Review* some time back, he said that "Italians know India better than Indians Italians," and this he attributes, to some extent, to the spread of Sanskrit culture in Italy. There is a great similarity between India and Italy as regards geographical positions, the appearance and temperament of their people and the great part these two great countries played in the civilisations of Asia and Europe respectively. The wondrous congeniality of the two nations accounts for the fact, as the Professor writes, that Italian pupils follow Sanskrit "with an interest unknown to them for other subjects. Sanskrit is as a revelation to them, as something forgotten that revives little by little in their memory." "There lies in the structure of Sanskrit," the Professor continues, "something that acts on the minds of young Italians as a mysterious enticement; it is as the well-known voice of a far-away past which accounts for all that in our present life is a riddle and a mystery. As we listen to that voice, many a puzzle loses its secret, many a wrong path is traced back to the points in which we are again able to choose the right way, and our horizon enlarges and heightens."

Dr. Tucci in an article in a recent issue of *The Modern Review* gives the names of some Italian Sanskrit scholars and their activities. There was one Corresio who studied Sanskrit while quite young and dedicated all his life to the edition and translation of the *Ramayana*. Professor Kerbacker of the University of Naples rendered the

*Mricchakatika* into Italian verse, which has become one of the best poetical works of modern Italian literature.

Recently due to the writings of the Poet Tagore, as Dr. Tucci says, an increasing interest in modern India has begun amongst Italians. Indian art is also in great favour with the people of Italy, and "there is no good artist who does not know the name of Dr. Abanindra Nath Tagore."

These are no doubt very happy indications, when people are not rare in the West, who for want of proper sympathy fail to understand India rightly. India also on the other hand should give up all self-complacent moods, and shaking off all lethargy try to appreciate and assimilate the good things of the West.

#### A NEW TYPE OF SCHOOL.

When the great war that had devastated Europe came to an end, the countries directly affected by it became up and doing to readjust themselves. It is but natural. The casualties in the war were more than one can imagine. Many parts of those countries that had been converted into war-zones were depopulated. That to make up the loss, specially the loss in man-power, will require a supreme effort is undoubted. Hence we find that along with various other endeavours institutions are being started in some countries of Europe with the express objective of making the best use of the human material.

"*La Preventorium*" is the significant name of a type of such institutions, which are doing immense services in this line. They take charge of weak-bodied children, who for want of sufficient care get easily infected with fell diseases, and thus become hopeless invalids or are prematurely cut off, and they make them healthy and robust and return them to their parents. Mr. St. Nihal Singh, in an interesting, illustrated article appearing in a recent issue of *Welfare*, describes such a school, which he had the occasion to personally see while he was touring in Belgium. The school, he speaks

of, is ideally situated at Knock-sur-Mer, a coast-town between Belgium and Holland. It is a model residential institution—a paradise for children where there is life, freedom and joy. It is equipped with every conceivable contrivance for amusing children and making them happy—a nice establishment with a playground and a gymnasium having artistically arranged flower-beds and rows of willow. It contains swings of various kinds, ladders, horizontal bars, high and low hurdles for jumping, see-saws, tennis and badminton courts and a host of such things. The sea-beach close by constantly washed by the purest air laden with ozone, where the children move about playing and merry-making, and the shallow waters of the sea where they paddle about and bathe to their hearts' content give them health and vitality. As one enters the place, says the writer, one feels its rare attractiveness and cannot help admiring its bright-hued paraphernalia—its orderliness—its scrupulous cleanliness and above all its lively method of instruction. Singing, music and recitation play a great part in developing the faculties of the children. "What elsewhere would be taught by rule and rote, by text-book or moralisation, is taught here through play."

The school has an accommodation for two hundred boys, generally between six and twelve years of age, taken from all grades of society; and the teachers are ladies of a motherly disposition, having a special training in child psychology and child hygiene as well as in pedagogy. It has been so arranged that special care can be taken of each of the children, twenty of whom are under the charge of an *institutrix*. As soon as a boy is admitted, he is dressed, after a good bath and scrubbing from head to foot, in the school-uniform with the initials of the institution—"O. N. E." embroidered on the cap. A measurement of his height and chest as well as a medical examination by the institution doctor who is constantly in attendance, follow next. Generally the school sits twice a day, and the method of teaching, as has been said, is of a singularly attractive

kind. There is nothing of compulsion and strain, and whatever is learned is learned through play and fun. The daily routine of bath, physical exercise, play, study, eating and so on has been so framed that the children do not feel how time glides on. The usual course of work is broken now and again by a fire drill, or a picnic, or some excursion out of the ordinary. Besides, there is an arrangement for cinema show and wireless entertainment. This sort of training lasts for a period of three months after which the children go back to their homes full of health and vigour. It has been found that this short stay is enough for the purpose. One special feature of the institution is that board, lodge, clothing, medical attention and instruction of the children are provided free of charge. Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Belgium, who are its patrons, take personal interest in its work.

There can be no two opinions as to the supreme usefulness of such institutions and the more their number the better for every country. In India specially, where climate, poverty, political dependence for centuries and such other causes have combined and produced a marked physical degeneracy in the people, the establishment of such healthy homes for debilitated little boys and girls is a crying necessity. It is a lamentable fact that the rate of child-mortality in our country is very high. In a recent child welfare and maternity exhibition held in Delhi, it has been shown by statistics that in India more than two millions of children die every year. Specially in our big and congested cities the death-rate of children is something that is appalling. For example, in Bombay as many as six hundred deaths occur every year per thousand. Just imagine! It is indeed a matter of serious concern. Unless preventive hygienic measures are taken without delay it is bound to spell our disaster and ruin. Side by side with efficient, man-making education, our children, the future hopes of our country, must have ample facilities for physical culture. Let them be strong and healthy, and the pessimism

that has cast its gloomy shadow upon the land will ere long vanish.

#### THE STATUE OF BUDDHA IN AN AMERICAN PARK.\*

"In recent years many expounders of Oriental faiths have been heard in the Occident, but the appeal has been individual and unorganized. From Tokio now comes the news that Chinese, Korean and Japanese delegates assembled there have launched a movement 'for the propagation of Buddhism throughout the world.' This ambitious undertaking is to be carried on by means of speaking tours and with the aid of a wide distribution of Buddhist books, magazines and pamphlets in the various Western languages. As a favourable augury for it mention was made of the fact that Buddha has been publicly honored recently at meetings in Paris, Berlin, China, India, Korea and Formosa. Still more significant is the proposal just submitted to the Manhattan Park Commissioner for the erection of a statue of the sage in Central Park, New York. And the promoters are confident that, as the Christians have their Christmas day every year, so the time is at hand when populations all over the earth will gather to celebrate the day on which Buddha was born."—(*The Boston Herald*.)

One can ascertain the spirit in which the editor of *The Boston Herald* wrote. But the significance of the above news lies in the fact that our Oriental thought is pressing more and more upon the Occidental souls in general, and the American consciousness in particular. When thirty years ago that lion of Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda, thundered the message of the East in Chicago, hardly a dozen men could have dared prophesy the birth of a new dawn, hardly half a dozen could have exclaimed—"Again the light cometh from the East."

\* Extracts from a letter written to us by Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukherjee from New York, U.S.A.—EDITOR, P. B.



To-day in the perspective of the past thirty years, we can see that Swami Vivekananda was the beginning of a vast spiritual movement. Asia, the Mother of all the religions of the world, is again giving birth to a message which is making its impact upon all mankind. From now on missionaries will pour out of Asia into every part of the Western world bearing that message. None can doubt that.

But where does India stand? India who pioneered the new evangelism—where are her sons? What place do they occupy in the present spiritual torch-race? Will she not send ten Sannyasins to the one of China and Japan? When we say 'Sannyasins' we do not mean celibate men proud of their celibacy. Pride and conceit make a Sannyasin more despicable than the most desire-bound householder. In fact, when it comes to humility and celibacy our Indian Brahmacharins cannot surpass the Catholic priests who are numerous.

But there is one thing which, provided a Sannyasin is humble through and through, can be done by the Indian that no Catholic achieves. That is inclusiveness (Udāratā). The Catholic religion like all the other blends and branches of Western mentality is utterly exclusive. It proclaims the truth of one religion. It stigmatises all other religions as false.

But a preacher of our Sanatana Dharma can proclaim : "All religions are true to him who practises their essence and does not quarrel about their accretions." Vivekananda lived and acted with such humility that he became an example of Udāratā. Now we need many like him. A man who is conscious of his Sannyas is no Sannyasin.

Now as the Far Eastern nations are sending forth their messages of Reality, let us hope the lion-cubs of Vedanta will leap forth and do their part. India must not lag behind. What has taken place in the past thirty years is nothing compared with the tremendous and immeasurable influence that the wisdom of the East will exert on the Western spirit the next twenty years. And success will

attend those who are humbler than dust. For, he who is utterly humble is chosen to bear the precious burden of Truth. There is no other choice.

INTEREST GROWING IN AMERICA UNDER  
SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

Swami Prabhavananda, who is in charge of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, spent the 8th, 9th, and 10th of February in Tacoma, Washington, where he gave three lectures in the Theosophical Hall.

Owing to his engagements in Portland, his stay, much to the regret of all who heard him, was limited to three days only.

At his first lecture, "Evolution and Reincarnation," the hall was filled to capacity, and the interest shown was most intense. The Swami presented the truths of his subject so clearly and logically that, at the conclusion, expressions of satisfaction and delight were heard on every side.

His second lecture, "Karma and Freedom," was equally well attended and received.

On Wednesday afternoon, in his third lecture he spoke on "Avatars or Divine Incarnations." The attendance was good, though many, who would have liked to attend, were not able to do so, because of their duties in the workaday world. Very lovingly did the Swami handle his subject, which is of great interest to so many. The short hour of speaking was over all too soon, as was testified by the people who gathered about the Swami to ask eager questions and thank him for the message given.

In the evening, about twenty men and women, specially interested in the Vedanta philosophy, gathered in the home where Swami Prabhavananda was being entertained, to listen to him in a less formal and more intimate way.

Here, after an hour of music and pleasant talk—during which time the Swami answered most satisfy-

ingly many questions—it was suggested that a class for study and the practice of meditation be formed.

So the group was formed into a small society—a president and secretary-treasurer elected, and a committee appointed. It was decided that the dues were to be optional, each member paying what he or she could afford, looking toward the time when a centre can be opened with a Swami in charge.

Though the meeting was most informal, the earnestness of those present was plainly apparent, and we are praying that from this small shoot the mighty tree of Vedanta will grow, spreading its all-welcoming shade over many weary way-farers on the path, enabling them to find rest, refreshment and soul-enlightenment beneath its sheltering branches.

#### OBITUARY.

It is with feelings of deep sorrow that we announce the news of the passing away of Swami Subhananda and Swami Sachchidananda in the month of April last. Swami Subhananda, popularly known as Charu Babu was one of those ardent disciples of Swami Vivekananda who fired with the ideal of service, as preached by him, started the Ramakrishna Home of Service in Benares and after a long and weary period of great struggle and difficulties have brought the institution into its present stage. Swami Sachchidananda joined the Order during the time of Swami Vivekananda and was loved and admired by all for living a strict ascetic life. During a period of his life, seized with the spirit of visiting holy places, he travelled all over India on foot and enriched his life with experiences, which anybody who would talk with him could profit by. As such, each of them in his life represented an ideal, for which their memory will be treasured with love and reverence for a long time to come.

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# Prabuddha Bharata

उनिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI.

JUNE, 1926.

No. 6.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

15th January, 1921.

He was arguing with D—— in fun to prove the superiority of Bhakti over Jnâna. He quoted from *Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita*: "The Jnâni, ignorant of the bliss of Divine love, tastes like a crow the margosa fruits of Jnâna. But the devotee, knowing the mystery of Divine love, tastes like a cuckoo the mango-blossoms of Love.' The margosa fruit is bitter to the taste, and being a mature product of the tree, will have no further development and soon wither away. But the mango-blossom has a glorious future before it: it will grow and ripen into a luscious fruit; it implies progressiveness.

"Jnâna fully evolved becomes Bhakti. Practice of Knowledge leads the mind higher and higher, beyond the bounds of duality. But true Bhakti is its own end. Wherever he is, the devotee is ever full of the nectar of love and bliss Divine.

"Knowledge is necessary in the first stages of spiritual life to master the senses. Afterwards it is one continuous enjoyment of the beatific love of God.

"While travelling near Brindâvan, Swamiji had once to take shelter against rain in a deserted open building, having a single wall. On it he found these words written with charcoal: 'Desire, thou art like a base woman. But for thee I would have become Parabrahman.'

"And how beautiful these words of Thomas à Kempis, 'Speak, O Lord, for Thy servant heareth. Silence, all ye teachers! And silence, ye prophets! Speak Thou alone, O Lord, unto my soul!'"

The Swami then recited from a Bengali song: "'Come, O mind, let us evade lust and other passions, and live by ourselves'. But how difficult to evade them! It is these which have made brutes of men!

"Sri Râmakrishna had once asked a Pandit to discourse on some scriptural topic. The Pandit went on for more than an hour expounding the doctrine of *Triputi-bheda* (breaking up of the triad of knowledge). At the end, Sri Râmakrishna remarked, 'Nicely indeed you have spoken. But all I know is that I have my Mother and I am Her son.'"

18th January, 1921.

To-day the main topic of conversation was Hindi as the all-India language. The Swami said that on his way back from America, he had a Japanese colonel as a fellow-passenger in the steamer, who knew only his mother-tongue and German. It was the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, so said the Swami, that Raja Ram-mohun Roy, by his advocacy of English as against Sanskrit, had set back the progress of India by sixty years. The Swami continued: "If the common language of India is to be determined by the largest number of people speaking it, Hindi of course is that language. It took nearly a week for me to learn enough Gurmukhi to be able to read the *Granth Saheb*."

*19th January, 1921.*

The Swami spoke of America's material prosperity, its scientific improvements, railways and original developments in architecture which according to him are fine and light in America and rather massive in England.

"Americans are favoured of Fortune and therefore endowed with many graces of head and heart. They are hospitable and not jealous. How good and kind they were to Swamiji! How nicely Dr. Wright introduced him to the authorities of the Chicago Parliament of Religions!

"'Horace, hurry up!'—That is their way of waking up a man! The whole nation is rushing on. Have they not to compete with Europe? That however causes too many cases of nervous prostration.

"Once Swamiji and some American gentlemen on a trip to an island, had to catch a steamer at San Francisco. His companions hurried on, but Swamiji walked leisurely. They said, 'Swamiji, you must be quick, or the steamer will leave.' 'Never mind,' Swamiji replied, 'it will come again'. When they remarked at that that Indians had no idea of time, Swamiji made the neat retort, 'Yes, you live in time, we live in eternity.'

"It is not for nothing that they gave him their heartfelt devotion. They saw Spirit and Life in him. Those who had mixed with Swamiji intimately, are still his slaves. Mere intellectualism is not enough.

"I myself always received hospitality at their hands. Only three or four times I had to dine in hotels and that also on journeys."

*21st January, 1921.*

T— asked the Swami: "Maharaj, did you come across anyone in the West, who had realised Nirvikalpa Samadhi?"

The Swami replied: "None among persons I knew or heard of. A few only are said to have attained Savikalpa Samadhi. Tennyson used to fall into trance by repeating his own name, and Wordsworth by contemplating Nature. Emerson also seems to have experi-

enced it. But none are said to have realised Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This—the realisation of the Absolute Self—is India's peculiar experience."

T—: "Did not Jesus realise it?"

Swami: "Yes, he did. Such sayings as 'I and my Father are one' indicate that. Sri Râmakrishna also spoke of him as a Divine Incarnation. Studying the Bible as a boy, my faith in the Divinity of Christ was shaken by certain passages. He cried out while on the cross, 'Father, hast Thou forsaken me?' I thought as I read this, 'How is it? Can an Avatara feel like that?' I was only thirteen years old then."

B—: "Only thirteen years?"

Swami: "Yes, only that. Having realised the Self, can one ever forget It?"

B—: "But does not the sense of duality or separation occasionally intervene?"

Swami: "Separation from whom? The Avatara himself is the Divine. Can you think yourself as separate from yourself?"

*(To be continued.)*

## WHAT ARE THE TANTRAS?

There is a great misconception about the Tantras both in India and abroad. And it is this that accounts for all those criticisms which we find nowadays levelled against the Tantrika literature and practice in general. For instance, the philosophy and religion of the Tantras has been sweepingly termed as a blemish of the Hindus, a combination of necromancy, alchemy, jugglery and "religious feminism run mad," a system that inculcates all sorts of unearthly, mysterious and obscene rites. Volumes of such criticism may be cited, and the one object of all of them is to decry and taboo Tantrikism. But the most unfortunate part of it is that not only the

Western Orientalists but a certain section of the people of this land also, where Tantrikism was born and evolved, thoughtlessly cast aspersions on it. That all these criticisms are generally unjust and unmerited need not be told. They are misrepresentations and show the want of sympathy and toleration as well as the wrong information from which they proceed.

The reasons for our so remarking are obvious. In the first place, the Tantras cover a vast ground, containing so many different things in them that there is every chance of mistaking the abuses of a certain section for the practices of the whole school. Secondly, the major portion of the Tantrika literature is lost owing to the ravages of time, and what is extant, being confined to handwritten manuscripts in the custody of a very limited circle of adherents, may easily acquire a mysterious look about them. Thirdly, the Tantras, being full of technical terms and enjoining esoteric practices the real significance of which can only be learnt under the strict guidance of the initiates, are liable very often to be misconstrued. All these are the disadvantages under which the Tantras labour, and it is on account of them that we hear so much against the Tantras. But for the recent indefatigable labours of Sir John Woodroffe who being somehow attracted towards the subject has made a special study of it, the Tantras, it may be said, would have remained a sealed book to many. This Western savant has unearthed many Tantrika manuscripts, translated them into English with notes and comments and presented them to the general public in print. By his wonderful grasp of the subject he has been able to bring out the rationale of the Tantrika philosophy and prove the supreme usefulness of the Tantrika ritualism. We Hindus owe a deep debt of gratitude to this scholar.

The Tantras are many and various. Roughly we may classify them into three main divisions viz., Saiva, Vaishnava and Sakta according as they uphold Siva, Vishnu and Sakti as their respective deity of worship. Or we may follow another method and divide them into



three classes viz., monistic, qualified non-dualistic and dualistic according to their difference in metaphysical view-point. It matters little what standard of classification you take. The Saiva school has its followers in Northern India, Kashmir being its stronghold, as well as in Southern India. Of them those of Northern India are monistic, and those of Southern India qualified non-dualistic. The Vaishnava group which is qualified non-dualistic prevails mainly in the south. The Sakta section who are monistic are generally to be found in Bengal and Assam. Besides these three main groups, there are again the Soura, the Ganapatya and the Bauddha Tantrikas of whom we do not know much. All the above-mentioned divisions viz., Saiva, Vaishnava and Sakta, have certain principles and practices in common. Primarily, they all conceive of God as a Supreme Personality, having a double aspect in one of which He is transcendental while in the other He is or becomes the universe projecting out of Himself all names and forms. Secondly, they all consider the universe thus brought into being not as an illusion and a fictitious superimposition of a false principle, but as a true emanation from God, evolved successively from subtle to gross. Next, they all point to one goal, and this they designate as Enjoyment-Liberation (Bhukti-Mukti), the realisation of which is the *summum bonum* of life. Finally, they all recognise the importance of devotion in spiritual life and are liberal enough to make provision for all castes and both sexes. The practices common to all the groups are also many, and they may be noted here briefly. They are the construction and consecration of temples and images, the use of emblems, figures, mystic syllables and holy texts, the specific gestures and postures, the psycho-physical processes of awakening the static energy in the human body called the serpent power, the dissolution of the categories, the observance of sacraments and a host of other things.

Those who are acquainted with the state of the present-day religious life of our country must say that

Tantrikism has become our part and parcel. The influence of the Tantras can be felt everywhere. The Tantrika Deities occupy under different names a distinct place in our pantheon, and the origin of many of our religious rites may be traced to the Tantras. But we must confess that we know little of the Tantras—their historical bearings in our individual and collective life as well as their theoretical and practical implications. Is it not a matter of regret? The Tantras are the Agama Sastras, the fundamentals of which in the form of a mass of floating ideas date as far back as several hundred years before Christ. Of course, the Tantrika works as they exist today are later productions, and we say so judging from the style of their language, the method of the treatment of their subjects and such other evidences. Tantrikism has consequently undergone a long process of evolution assimilating many new things from different quarters. But the original source of their inspiration was that repository of eternal wisdom, the Vedas. Like all other orthodox Indian scriptures and schools of philosophy they recognise the supreme authority of the Vedas and try to interpret and amplify the truths contained therein. It may be said that they are a practical application of some of the ultimate principles of the Upanishads, the Jnanakanda portion of the Vedas, reinforced with an elaborate but most effective system of rituals so arranged and manipulated as to make them suitable for all types of aspirants, leading all gradually to the highest Ideal. But there are so many ignorant notions and talks as to the exact relationship between the Tantras and the Vedas that it would be proper if we dilate on it a little. Sir John Woodroffe, for instance, speaks of one Brahmo author who remarked that the relation between the Tantras and the Upanishads was "as far removed as that between hell and heaven." Comments on remarks like this are not necessary. They simply prove the enormity of our ignorance.

The points of agreement and similarity between the Tantras and the Vedas are quite numerous. We shall notice here only a few ones, and they will be quite

enough to establish our assertion. First, the identity of the individual soul and the Absolute Consciousness, the final conclusion of the Upanishadic seers, is recognised by many of the Tantras belonging to the Sakta and Saiva groups. For example, a Sakta Sadhaka who must be monistic in his outlook begins his day by meditating: "I am the Creative Power. I am the Male Principle who is beyond grief. I am Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, the One who is eternally free." At noon while seated for worship and performing the Bhuta-Suddhi which means the dissolution of the categories, he tries to merge his individuality and become one with the Absolute finally declaring: "I am She." This pregnant sentence of three words is nothing but a counterpart of the Upanishadic utterance: "I am He." In the evening after finishing the day's observances he again tries to realise his oneness with the Absolute. Do not all these indicate a clear note of Vedantic monism in the Sakta Tantras? Secondly, the conception of the Creative Principle whom they call Sakti, the eternal partner of the Ultimate Reality, is also derived from the Vedas. Look at the famous Devi-Sukta occurring in the Rigveda, which runs: "I am the Sovereign Queen, the Chief of all the objects of worship. I am the One whose all-pervading self the gods manifest, whose birthplace is in the midst of causal waters, who breathing forth gives form to all created worlds and yet extends beyond. How vast am I!" The Tantras developed this idea of the Creative Principle, the Universal Mother, existing originally in germs in the Vedas and made a philosophy out of it. Thirdly, the doctrines of Karma, of the three bodies, causal, subtle and gross, and of the three states of waking, dream and sound sleep, in their individual and collective aspects, which are some of the fundamentals of the Vedantic metaphysics, psychology and ethics, have been accepted by the Tantras. Yoga in all its forms, Mantra, Hatha, Laya and Jnana, as well as the Vedic rites of sacrifice (Homa) and the ten sacraments (Sanskaras) have been recognised by the Tantras. Even the ill-fated

doctrines of the worship with five-fold objects (Pancha-tattva Upasana) and of magic are not altogether innovations in the Tantras, and may be traced to have their origin in the Vedas.

The famous six systems of Indian philosophy which draw their inspiration from the Vedas indicate the various types of original philosophic research in India. Though the Tantras are not in agreement with all of them, they recognise their place, for it occurs in one of the Tantras that Siva says: "The six systems of philosophy are the six limbs of Kula (the Enlightened One) and parts of his body." We shall show how the Sakta Tantras, the third group of the main divisions, are a synthesis between the pure monism of Uttaramimamsa or Vedanta as interpreted by Sankara and the dualism of the Sankhyas.

All the three systems, the Maya-vada of Sankara, the Purusha-Prakriti-vada of the Sankhyas and the Sakti-vada, agree as to the general nature of the Absolute, the Formless Consciousness, and posit along with it a Finitising Principle called Maya, Prakriti and Sakti respectively. The Sankhyas are, as we have said, dualistic, for they admit the reality of two independent entities viz., Purusha, the Formless Principle, and Prakriti, the Formative Principle, the former being infinite in number and the latter one. Sankara's Vedanta does not discard these two categories but resolves them into one which is Brahman. The dualistic position of the Sankhyas, as it is, cannot be maintained however much you may stretch your logic and argue. The plurality of the Purushas, each an Absolute, and the independent reality of Prakriti are doctrines whose fallaciousness is too apparent to need any elaboration here. Sankara shows that Purusha is one though it appears as many, being encased in material body and mind under the veiling influence of Maya. Besides, he proves that Prakriti, the Finitising Principle, cannot be independent and separate, for in liberation it vanishes for the liberated Purusha, though existing for those who appear to be in bondage. Sankara, an ultra-monist, upholds the illusory character of the universe and

allows it only a relative reality, Brahman alone being truly real. For, has it not been said again and again by Sankara and his school who maintain Maya-vada like him : "Brahman alone is true and the world false"? Here comes in the Sákta philosophy and raises a protest against the Maya-vada Vedanta and effects a synthesis between the dualism of the Sankhyas and the pure monism of Sankara. Sakti is Power manifesting itself under various forms, conscious and unconscious; and this world is a play-ground of Sakti. Now Sakti or Power implies one that possesses that Power, and the two are not separate but one and the same. Sakti, Maya or Prakriti on the one hand and Siva, Brahman or Purusha on the other denote two aspects of the same Reality. One cannot exist without the other. The serpent, whether it sits quiet coiled or runs about in a zigzag course is the self-same serpent. The phenomenal universe and its noumenal background are both equally real. According to Sankara Brahman contains no trace or seed of objectivity, and our so-called experience of duality and manifoldness is a figment of the Collective Ignorance, the very notion of creation being fictitious. But what is this entity of Collective Ignorance, what is its nature? It is, as Sankara says, an inscrutable Power, neither real nor unreal. Is this a satisfactory explanation? The Sákta Tantras do not thus evade the question but seek to explain it by making the ultimate Reality a unity of apparently two Principles, Formless and Formative, Static and Kinetic. In this way, it may be said, they are an advance upon the ultra-monism of Sankara.

The scope of this article will not allow us to go into the details of the philosophy of the Tantras beyond a short outline as sketched above. Like all other schools of Indian philosophy and religion the value of the Tantras lies in their extreme practicableness. Philosophy and religion are not worth their name if they cannot be materialised in life. The Tantras have therefore evolved a system of rituals that is through and through practical. Let an aspirant see for himself whether it is so or not

One special feature of the Tantrika Sadhana, we may note here, is that it takes man where he stands, with all his foibles and failings and gives him a push forward, and herein is contained its beauty and grandeur. It is not onesided, other-worldly and ascetic ; it is all-comprehensive in its outlook. Consequently the supreme state of blessedness has been described by it as Enjoyment-Liberation (Bhukti-Mukti). The Tantras are not against a man who cannot kill outright his baser animal instincts but ask him to spiritualise them and thus uplift him slowly and gradually. Besides, the rituals in which the Tantras abound, though they may not be necessary for the highly developed souls, are useful to those who require external helps at the outset. The Tantrika Sadhana begins with the more or less anthropomorphic image and its material service reproducing the ways of our daily life, but it does not stop there. It passes through emblems, figures and mental worship of the point of light, till at last the individual consciousness being merged in the Universal Consciousness there is the realisation of the final union of Siva and Sakti. Like Vedanta the Tantras look upon man as Divine. Man is a microcosm (a universe in miniature). Whatever exists in the outer universe exists in him also. All the categories and worlds are within him, and so are Siva and Sakti. By the practice of Kundali-Yoga, an important part of the Tantrika Sadhana, the individual man must rouse the sleeping energy within him and make it pass from its abode, Muladhara, through the different centres or planes of consciousness till at last at the thousand-petaled Sahasrara there is a complete dissolution of the categories and worlds leading him to the realisation of the Final Beatitude. This Kundali-Yoga like Patanjali's Raja-Yoga is extremely scientific and open to practical demonstration in one's life, and can be successfully practised like the latter under the guidance of an able teacher.

The Tantrika Sadhana is indeed a glorious acquisition in the spiritual history of the world. Its elaborate rituals

and paraphernalia of worship have their counterparts in the Catholic Christian Church of the West. Swami Vivekananda while preaching Vedanta in Europe noticed this fact and aptly remarked: "The Catholics are the Saktas in practice." Sir John Woodroffe is also of the same opinion, and in his *Shakti and Shakta*, he has nicely brought out some interesting analogies. Thus, he says, like the Tantrikas the Catholic Church has its sacraments, congregational and private worship with bell, light and incense, images, devotional rites such as *novenas* and the like, the threefold *angelus* at morn, noon and evening, the telling of beads, the wearing of scapulars, medals etc., pilgrimage, fasting, abstinence and mortification, renunciation, meditation, union of mystical theology (Samadhi) and such others. Who knows that the Catholic Church has not been influenced by the Tantras, for the religion of the Tantras, as we have said, is one of the oldest? Besides, Sir John thinks that some of the modern religious or semi-religious works on *New Thought*, *Will Power*, *Vitalism*, *Creative Thought*, *Mental Therapeutics*, *Secret of Achievement*, etc., must have been written by people who have somehow or other come under the influence of Tantrika literature and practice, higher and lower. How far this is true we do not know. But this is certain that almost every human being, in so far as he wants power, physical, intellectual, moral or spiritual, is within the domain of Sakti, the Creative Energy, and unless and until She is propitiated there is no chance of his attaining the desired end. Whether we seek health, strength and beauty, material prosperity, intellectual proficiency, or moral and spiritual excellence, we must acknowledge our allegiance to Her and try to please Her. And the Tantras, specially the Sakta Tantras, uphold the worship of God as the Power Reality who is at the root of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe.

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## "THEE I LOVE IN ALL."

BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA.

Thee I love in all, and all I love for Thee.  
Youth and old, rich and poor,  
The birds that sing, and birds that cry,  
Faces that shine, and faces in gloom :  
In all I love Thee, and for Thee I love them all.  
I adore Thee in flowers, I adore Thee in trees,—and in  
grass that grows so low.  
I lift my head in worship to gaze on Thee in  
sapphire sky.  
As I stand on the river bank and behold Thy silver gleam  
on moonlit night.  
My heart heaves with delight.  
I sing Thy praise with the glory of dawn,  
And I chant Thy supplication at the quiet of setting sun.  
I love those that dance with joy,  
And I love those that are crushed by sorrow.  
For Thee I love them all, and Thee I love in all.  
Above and below and on all sides hast Thou encircled me.  
It is Thy love I give Thee,  
As the altar-flower gives its fragrance at Thy feet.  
Art Thou not its fragrance and its life?  
Art Thou not its beauty and its soul?  
Like unto that flower I lie at Thy feet  
And offer Thee Thine own gift : my love and my life.

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE WORLD-PROBLEM.

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA.

We are passing through a period of transition. A chapter in the history of human progress and civilisation has come to a close, and we are about to begin a new one. The last two centuries have witnessed the dead-



liest of fights between science and her arch-enemy religion. Religions had all along looked down upon all secular knowledge and refused to be justified by the aid of secular knowledge before this fight began. The results of such a fight have been far-reaching. The disinterested love of truth without any regard for the consequences it may have on our faiths and beliefs, which actuated the scientific minds of two centuries ago, has brought about the complete victory of science over religion. Reason has taken the supreme place in man's life, and he finds it difficult to believe in anything simply because such and such scriptures ask him to do so. Anything whose existence cannot be proved by reason or by the direct perception of the senses is thrown out as a superstition. The truth of everything is based on the positive data of experience through the senses. Though these tests of knowledge were sufficient to bring about a revolution in the scientific world, yet they were quite inefficient in the realm of the Self, the entry into which can be attained only through self-control, sacrifice and self-abnegation. The scientific mind on account of its outgoing tendency could not attain to that serene calmness, in which alone the truth, the knowledge of the Self, is reflected. This has made the scientific West materialistic in her outlook of life, and she has built her society on a new basis—that of enjoyment, and in this direction she has with her indomitable energy attained a degree of success undreamt of in the past ages. But unfortunately it has made her selfish and egoistic, and she thinks that by dint of her superior merits she has attained a stage in civilisation which has not been achieved by any nation up to now, though the criterion of civilisation is fixed by herself after her own ideals. This attitude has made her look down upon other nations outside the pale of this scientific influence as barbarians.

Though science has overthrown religion completely as a "superstition which is becoming less indispensable to society, though in the past, especially in the child-

hood of races it might have been a valuable element of civilisation," it is yet dumb before the problems of the modern world. It has undermined all religious faiths on the ground that they are not based on reason, but has nothing positive to offer in exchange, which would be a motive-power for the progress of humanity in the future. Science has done much in the field of art, trade, manufactures, means of communication and other practical appliances, but it has failed to bring happiness and peace to a greater part of humanity. It has only increased "the extent and intensity of man's wants with its concomitant physical and moral degradation." The natural instinct of man to possess things and enjoy them has outgrown all limits so as to become a menace to society, leading to wars of the kind we have recently witnessed. The condition of the masses, the backbone of all nations, is quite pitiable. They have ceased to be men and have almost come down to the level of beasts. They toil whole day so that a few may grow rich, they themselves getting only a bare sustenance often insufficient to keep the wolf from their doors. Wealth which is not equally distributed is always a curse.

Activity and the race for possession which have built up the Western nations have been pushed to such an extremity that they have now become impediments to living freely and nobly. Supreme discontent and unhappiness is reigning in the West at present. Social life has got unbalanced and lost all stability. Suicides arising from failure, despair and misery are ever on the increase. Family life is getting disintegrated, and divorces have become only too common. A glance through a particular class of literature of modern times both in the East as well as in the West gives a clear picture of the subconscious working of the minds of the people. Man's instincts are represented as all-compelling, and his strength lies not in controlling but in giving free vent to his passions. In other words, it is idealising what is apparently real instead of trying to

hold up any ideal to society. Surely that is not the way to progress.

The effect of such a civilisation on the rest of the world in these days of easy communication cannot be treated lightly. The East has been gradually changing her ideal for that of the West. In India her conquest by the English helped only to open her gates to the free thought and materialism of the West. She has lost faith in her Rishis and the ideals held out by them, getting imbued with the agnostic thought and philosophy of the West. Such a sudden change can only end in losing both, failing to grasp the new and losing what we have already. India has thus broken loose from her moorings and is drifting, leading a hypocritical, aimless life despised by all nations.

What little is left of religion after such a defeat at the hands of science is mainly a formal belief in dogmas and tenets. Even here there is much narrow-mindedness and intolerance. In Europe and America the State had for long exercised its influence on the faith of its subjects, and it was only political expediency that finally brought them the religious liberty they are enjoying and not conviction. In America even to this day free thought is seriously handicapped in most of the universities. Though tolerance is legally granted, yet society is bigoted, enforcing serious disabilities on people holding unorthodox views. Even in India, whose one theme has been to evolve the Vedic doctrine—"There exists but One, though sages call it differently," her Eternal Religion, the grand synthesis of all spiritual ideals, is broken up into conflicting sects at tug of war with each other. The essence of religion is forgotten, and the people are holding to external formalities as religion. Such is the condition of the world to-day, and not much different was it at the advent of Sri Ramakrishna into this world. Nature abhors vacuum. To fill up the spiritual vacuum in this world, to satisfy the great want felt all over the

world, came this great spiritual force in the personality of Sri Ramakrishna.

In such a world as painted above did Sri Ramakrishna proclaim in a trumpet voice—"Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! I have found the Ancient One—the Divine Mother, who is beyond all darkness and delusion, knowing whom alone you shall be saved from death and misery." "Different religions are different paths leading to the same goal. So help, and do not fight. Let assimilation and not destruction be your motto. Harmony and peace and not dissension!" To the question, "Sir, have you seen God?" came quick the answer uttered with all the conviction and sincerity that could be expected—"Yes, I see Him as I see you, only in a much intenser sense." The dark clouds of agnosticism and doubt seemed to melt before these statements. It was quite natural; for, to this man religion was not a mere dogma or theory but a reality that could be felt or sensed if you like to say so, just like anything of this world. This man in his younger days was seized with the idea whether God exists and could be seen. Day after day he would weep and say—"Mother, is it true that Thou existest, or is it all poetry? Is there such a reality as the Blissful Mother? Do Thou manifest the Self in me, Thou Mother of the Universe!" As a result of such deep faith and earnest prayers the Divine Mother revealed Herself unto this yearning soul. Still this man was not educated in the modern sense of the term. Early in life he had realised that all secular learning was meant merely for advancing material comforts, and had refused to go to school resolving to devote himself solely to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. His life is a challenge to the modern intellectualism. It has shown that learning is not essential, and that the Truth flashes in the pure mind. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Yet against his intellect some made desperate attempts only to be vanquished. "They felt themselves in his presence to be dealing with forces that they could not gauge, drawing on wisdom which they were unable to fathom."

It is an accepted fact requiring no proof in these days that intellect is the prime factor in the progress of humanity—a result mainly based probably on the achievements gained by the human intellect in this scientific age. But an examination of this accepted common notion would lead to contradictions and discrepancies, and we shall be forced to come to the conclusion that the intellect, though it plays an important part in the progress of humanity, is yet subordinate to certain other forces which contribute directly to progress, and that when these forces are exhausted progress comes to an end, and henceforth mere intellectualism works out the decay and disintegration of society. Every thoughtful man would come to this conclusion if he should only study the society of these days. Man is a social being, and his progress as such always lies in his self-sacrifice for the good of others. Hence nations which have the best ethical training have always arrived at and have attained the highest point in civilisation. Mere intellectualism invariably leads to selfishness in the absence of the controlling force of religion.

Another knotty point on which the life of Sri Ramakrishna throws a flood of light is the relative claims of faith and reason. Sri Ramakrishna never asked any one to accept everything on faith but insisted that everything must be reasoned out, for, the first test of true teaching is that it should not contradict reason. The proof of religion depends on the truth of the constitution of man. So also is reason, and therefore they cannot contradict each other. Yet he points out that reason is limited and confined to the world of the senses. There is another instrument of knowledge which is called inspiration and which is beyond the intellect. Man when he gets inspired goes beyond the sense-plane and comes face to face with facts which he could not have reasoned out. He sees things which men attached to the senses do not see nor yet understand. This is the field of religion. All scientific knowledge is based on data of experience, facts which we have perceived, without which we cannot

reason out any truth. Similarly the science of religion must also be based on such data, and not on vain arguments which cannot lead us to anything. So Sri Ramakrishna who asks every one to utilise his reason asks in the same breath to have faith also, by which he means that we should not give ourselves up to vain argumentation which will not help us to realise God. But the extreme case of believing every bit of nonsense in the name of religion he thought was quite degrading. "Prophets have the right to say that they have known facts which every one can attain to and verify if they follow suit." This attitude of his is sure to bring about a fellow-feeling between the two types of religious expression which now go under the popular name of religion and science. Both of them are fundamentals of human nature and so cannot be antagonistic. We often find in scientific men a kind of religious reverence. It is the growth of one at the cost of the other that often causes disharmony. If only both of them would make concessions and sacrifice the non-essentials that have accumulated round each, there would be harmony once more, and each would be the better for it. What is science but a search after God, the Infinite in the external world? Yet the external is only a part of the universe, and in it we cannot find the Truth which will explain all phenomena. We have to take the internal world also, and when we proceed in this direction science becomes religion.

*(To be continued)*

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## THE CRY OF AGONY.\*

BY BRAHMACHARI KUMARA CHAITANYA.

“Like a child sent with a fluttering light  
To feel his way along a gusty night,  
Man walks the world ;  
Again and yet again  
The lamp shall be by fits of  
Passion slain ;  
But shall not He  
Who sent him from the door  
Re-light the lamp  
Once more and yet once more?”

### I

To us of little vision, this life is a reality. Yea, sometimes a very grim one. It was the cold weather of 1924 in one of the biggest coalfields of Hazaribagh, Behar. We were two. He—a medical practitioner, and I a beggar. Smallpox had broken out. We were out inspecting a few segregated quarantine huts. We saw a number of poor coal-diggers, wretched, almost nude. Some among them were crying aloud out of sore sufferings and woes they could not stand. Some were down on death-bed with the last groan of agony on their lips before the tragedy would end. ‘You sanctioned so much ration, Sir,’ they said to their dear Doctor, ‘but the middle men, a cruel lot, have denied most of it to us.’

Was it a living instance of sucking the life-blood of the masses and waxing fat on it? Who can tell?

Some eight thousands of them were gathered together in the same field for a mess of bread—grown up in dirt and filth we cannot conceive of,—for it surpassed the wretched picture usually associated with the slums of our urban life,—putting on the scantiest raiment amidst the raging cold of that hilly district, getting weekly wages on

\* Paper read at the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention, Belur, on the 5th April, 1926.

Sundays, spending everything the next day in wine and enjoyment, absolutely without education,—mere preys to a system of commercialised vice which an all-assertive industrial civilisation had set up,—altogether a pitiable sight epitomised! A glimpse of 'Darkest Bhâratavarsha'—our submerged masses! One felt it was almost a sacrilege to talk to them of a spiritual integration of things we are so much in need of.

Palæo-Indologists' India and our own familiar land are quite different tales. We know modern alchemy exhibited its amazing miracle when it produced the brightest colours out of coal-tar, formerly put aside as a worthless refuse stuff. We sigh for a greater human artist that can make honourable men of us,—a sunken lot, altogether haunted and hopeless. Pliny the Elder, as a spirited citizen of the Eternal City, lamented the drain of Roman gold into India. But *we* know to-day how the process has undergone a complete change.

The present writer looked at them for days and months together. Then he retired—ultimately to become merely moody and thoughtful over it.—What was he? He looked at himself,—young in age, but definitely lacking in the amount of physical stamina which could carry him through, with of course other shortcomings,—yet an aspirant of the highest Truth!

If we look at the youth of India, we have to hope against hope. His extra-Indian compeers possess a decided superiority over him, inasmuch as they have a healthier, brighter and better outlook of life on the very face of it. While folly of follies, we are *dreaming* to build a future Indian nationhood on the solid foundation of a wide-spread illiteracy! We live in the reign of disease, death and poverty, not knowing when our serfdom would end. Before our very eyes we see and most of all *feel* our degeneracy and degradation.

## II

What is the way out? No external party is to be blamed. We ourselves are the greatest culprits.



A house divided against itself cannot stand. From the days of Sudâsa and the Battle of Ten Kings in the Rig-Veda, the very dawn of Indo-Aryan civilisation, to Porus, prominent in the eventful episode of Alexander's expedition in the Punjab, to Prithviraj-Jaychandra before the hegemony of the Pathans, to the mutually quarrelling Marathas in the 18th century,—right up to Mirzafar in the memorable days of Lord Clive,—all through it is a history of political disunion and disruption writ large—uniformly repeating itself.

We glibly talk of India's message to the world. A band of us is rightly rousing itself to carry and spread it broadcast all over the world. Well and good. But let us approach it to-day from a different point of view and set our own house in order, first and foremost. But where is that troop of enthusiasts, who would face the stronghold of antagonists in the land of Ind and hold aloft the Ideal of Creative Altruism, as living contradictions to the learned plea that it is a mere antiquated, unsuitable, anachronistic piece of Mediævalism?

### III

From our own world of intense individual struggle we look up to the dual personality of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. We go deeper to discover not two really, but the same Book of Life with a double unfoldment.

In the now famous discourse upon his Master the Swami thus charges us all in the end :

"Men and women of to-day, if there be among you any pure fresh flower, let it be laid on the altar of God !"

Indeed, the Master's life was a blazing fire of Divine Love and Ecstasy. An approach to it, howsoever critical and analytic, convinces us all that a super-conscious, transcendent realisation is the only thing worth fighting for. Blessed are they that can seek after the Kingdom of Heaven and with a soldier's unflinching courage and unquenchable zeal fight their way on inch by inch in the quest of the Holy Grail along a path which the Vedas

declare to be difficult to tread like the sharp edge of a razor !

Let us here sound a note of caution. In our extra-critical scientific attempt to humanise Sri Ramakrishna—a cry recently raised—we must not totally blind ourselves to the transcendent realisations in which his mind almost always moved and which necessarily formed the essential factor of his personality. If we are sincere enough, his life acts as a challenge to us—a sort of dynamite sure to shatter and pulverise the apparently solid rock of our lives, replete with worldly progress and achievements, with hankerings of the flesh rampant in all.

But the researches of the medical materialism of our own day are trying their utmost to interpret spiritual aspirations in terms of physical ailment. A St. Theresa of blessed memory is perhaps pronounced to be attacked with duodenal catarrh or something akin to it. To people of this school a St. Paul or a St. Francis, incidentally every spiritual aspirant, is a mere anti-social misanthrope, a diseased maniac with brain-fag, an unbalanced, effeminate, sentimental enthusiast ! What wonder that Sri Ramakrishna was called a madman by a Bengalee of light and leading ?

To such we reverentially offer the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, yet another couple of Indian Supermen of the last century. Let them give up the transcendental outlook if they so like and weigh these personalities in the balance first as men of character, from a plain, ordinary point of view. For once the highest and best conceptions of sanity and perfect manliness can be set up as the standard of judgment.

For us whose minds cannot move beyond the sense-plane, what is the special message of Sri Ramakrishna ?

We *talk* of morality, for we know bitterly the want of it. But he was a moral man *par excellence*, unapproachable,—purity personified. For he came to fulfil what was said by the sages of old : *यथा हि वृक्षेन्द्रियाणि तस्य वृक्षा प्रतिष्ठाता ।* His inner knowledge alone is well established, who has his senses under control.

His love of truth is yet another feature to be noted. To be truthful was an instinct with him. Hardly shall we find another man of word like him, and the common Hindi adage was most forcibly fulfilled in him—*Mard kī bāt hāthī kâ dānt*—a man's word is verily like the tusk of an elephant ; when it has once come out there is no more retraction.

When we consider his breadth of vision, his openness and toleration, we are bound to say that in a sense (not of course academic) he was perhaps the best type of an educated man we can conceive of, although he had not much of literacy. A rare teacher, too, who could minister unto all according to their respective needs and capacities. Although himself a Sannyasin, he never said 'Give up' to everybody. This aspect of his life is best appreciated with reference to his original contributions to the philosophy and religion of India, incidentally of the world. Attuned to the scientific age which had already come in, his approach to the eternal verities of life, however, was definitely not from the side of intellect, not merely theoretical. Although the greatest intellects have tried to show from the ancient scriptures that he came to fulfil by his life what had been said ages ago. Metaphysics and science sing his glory to-day. But he was a shrewd practical man. By an intense Sadhana prolonged for more than a decade he personally realised the truth *through every path* and substantiated what had been declared of old in the Vedic texts—एकं सविता वरुणा वदन्ति—Truth is one, sages call It variously. But his testimony was unique.

In the early religious history of India and of the world the truth of only one path at a time (so far as its practical carrying out in life was concerned) was declared by respective teachers—such as the worship of Varuna in the early Rig-Vedic age, of Indra and other deities later on, Jainism of Pârsva and Mahâvira, Aryadhamma of Buddhagotama, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism and other minor Paurânika cults, theistic teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, our own monistic, dualistic and

qualified monistic schemes of life—and so on. It was left for Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami to unite all "in the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World." For Christianity and Islam also claimed the Master's attention. In him the old order and the new melted and became one. In the culture-history of humanity he stands as the beginning of the New—that which is yet TO BE. In the realm of Self-culture and higher thought it was his privilege to synthesise what has so long remained dissociated. A perusal of his life is in itself a liberal education. It is sure to mete out a shattering blow to our innate dogmatism, bigotry, intolerance and narrow conventionalism.

The Swami Vivekananda, his chief apostle, elaborated the same theme and gave a complete Vedantic scheme, on the solid basis of which civic society could be built and evolved, so that according to our fitness we can work out our salvation through an intense spiritual discipline, or labours in the domains of art and literature, trade and commerce, science and social service. Religion is not something strange, quixotic, fit for the cloister, but an essential factor in our workaday life. The Master and his Elect have proved for good that character alone is the one sure standard which can measure our inner advancement. How we are fearless and ready to sacrifice the less for the greater, free and sincere to live, die and hope for the ignorant, the down-trodden, the distressed,—these are some of the salient, decisive factors—our positive qualities.

Like the Father, the Son was a synthesis of the eternal polarities of life,—intensely idealistic, scrupulously pragmatic. Dynamic activity, Rajas, and the intense rest, the calmness of Sattva, could be found in him side by side. He made it clear that a scientific acumen and a religious aspiration are never contradictory. But ultimately the heart must rule, intuition should be made supreme. Specialists, it is said, in different branches of study stood amazed at his general grasp in their respective fields, just as athletes wondered at that

symmetric, Hellenic type of ideal physical beauty that he represented. Yet all was subordinated to the one spiritual theme, the dominant key-note of that musical, transcendent life of Samâdhi.

Amidst all our downfall ought not an example like this to be our 'friend, philosopher and guide'?

The Swami was perhaps the strongest contradiction of that popular misconception that too much stress on spirituality has marred all our worldly activities. It is a historical blunder to suppose that we are bound to lag behind in respect of worldly attainments if we stick to our supreme ideal of Renunciation. The Vedic literature convinces us that though dominantly religious, we never lagged behind in any of the domains of worldly progress,—our achievements in positive, exact science, trade and industry, art, agriculture and literature were not of a mean order. The Maurya and Gupta ages, and the age of Harshavardhan were glorious chapters in the culture-history of India,—both secular and spiritual.

#### IV

To conclude with a personal note. Our individual lives reveal too many disparities and insufficiencies when we confront these dual fountain-heads of holiness and self-denial. But what does revive our hope? 'It is not what man *does*, but what he *will do*.'

Perhaps yet another stronger reason. We who have taken refuge in Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, not of course in any dogmatic, denominational sense, are verily children of Immortality, for the ideas and ideals represented by them cannot die.

Thank our stars,—had we been Spartan children the nation would perhaps have compelled us to be devoured by vultures, the grossest way for the fittest of former days to survive! What harm if our strength fails and we have to succumb, to make room for the stronger, more vigorous, and more gifted Soldiers of Liberty to come and take up their banner and fight to a finish? Mere camp-

followers and laggards that we are, let us depart with these words of the Romantic Poet on our lips—

“All that I could never be,  
All that was not in me,  
Is yet there—in His hands  
Who planned the perfect whole !”

—Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda—indeed a perfect whole !

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## IN MEMORIAM.

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA.

The Ramakrishna Mission is distinctly poorer to-day by the passing away of its two old members in quick succession. Swami Subhananda, Charu Babu of the Benares Home of Service, and Swami Sachhidananda, generally known as Budo-Baba, breathed their last on the 16th and the 22nd April respectively.

The circumstances under which the former melancholy event took place are really tragic. While bathing in the Gangetic canal near the Kankhal Sevashrama, he was accidentally carried away by the strong current. Subsequently the body was discovered nearly a mile down the canal. All efforts failed to restore him to life. He was fifty-five years old at the time of his death.

The name of Swami Subhananda is inseparably connected with the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Benares. As a matter of fact, he was one of the two pioneer workers who brought the institution into existence. Before his eyes and under his active guidance, the Home has reached its present state of development when it is not only recognised as the most prominent philanthropic centre of the Ramakrishna Mission but also as one of the pioneer institutions of its kind in the whole

country. His life connected with the Home for the last quarter of a century was one of consecration and sacrifice, and he devoted his entire energy to the cause, having his sole reward in the satisfaction of seeing a work done from purely disinterested motives.

Swami Subhananda, formerly known as Charu Chandra Das, came of a respectable Kayastha family of Ichhapura, a village in the Twenty-four Perganas. He was a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and his illustrious disciple as early as 1897. He came to Benares a couple of years later with his parents, and there he became a prominent figure in a small circle of friends who intended to devote their life to the ideal of the Seva work at that time so brilliantly put before the country by Swami Vivekananda. They organised a small brotherhood, called "Poor Men's Relief Association." The small seed sown so unostentatiously subsequently grew into the mighty tree of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service. One of his co-workers found an old woman, starving and ailing, by the roadside, and picked her up. He begged a four anna piece and therewith began to nurse her. This is the humble beginning of the work. Later on Swami Vivekananda from whom Charu Babu received his initiation, changed the name of the institution into the Ramakrishna Home of Service, the word "Mission" having been added afterwards. Needless to say, Swami Subhananda played the part of the hero through all the stages and phases of its growth. Unruffled alike by weal and woe, Swami Subhananda, the ideal Karma-Yogi, stuck to his post. He was instrumental in drawing many young men to the cause of service and fired their imagination to consecrate their lives for the suffering poor and sick Narayanas. His perseverance, tenacity and indefatigable energy were really marvellous. And in the midst of multifarious works he always made time for regular meditation and study. His frugal and simple life was a source of inspiration to all who came in contact with him. He worked with clock-like regularity. He maintained his austere and methodical habit up to the

last days of his life. Though the most prominent worker of the Sevashrama, he never made himself burden upon the institution but always paid his expenses which were very small. He made an extensive pilgrim age in the country, and for the last five years since his initiation into Sannyasa in 1921 by Swami Brahmananda, he devoted his life mainly to religious exercises, retiring from active participation in the Sevashrama duties. One noticeable feature of his life, which is the secret of Karma-Yoga, was that he used to concentrate his entire energy on the work in which he was engaged for the time being. With his passing away, the Ramakrishna Mission has lost one of its ideal workers and the Benares Home of Service its friend, philosopher and guide.

Swami Subhananda is no more in his physical body, but his noble life will, for a long time, remain as a bright example before the workers of the Mission, and his memory will always be cherished with love and devotion.

Swami Sachchidananda entered into Mahasamadhi in the Benares Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at the ripe old age of eighty-six. He had been long suffering from a protracted attack of asthma to which he ultimately succumbed. The last moments before his passing away were wonderfully calm and serene.

Prasanna Kumar Gupta, for that was his original name, severed his connection with his family at the age of twelve under the assumed name of Dinanath and mainly served as a contractor at Puri and other places. Though he at times earned plenty of money he never spent it on his personal comforts. Imbued with religious tendencies from early age, he led the life of a bachelor, and from about forty-fifth year of his life he began to feel a strong disgust for worldly attachments. From that time he eschewed many comforts of life and strictly lived on vegetarian diet, cooking a very frugal meal with his own hands. Thus leading an ascetic life for six years he derived no solace and at last resolved to come over to Benares which is always frequented by the Sadhus and



Mahatmas, in search of a spiritual teacher. Leaving the entire charge of his property to a friend, he came to Benares and saw some religious persons who could not however fulfil his desires. At last he came in contact with some disciples of Sri Ramakrishna where they had been some disciples of Sri Ramakrishna at Benares where they had been then practising Tapasya. He received admission into the Order of Monks from Swami Saradananda. The main feature of his religious life was that of an itinerant monk, and he travelled almost all over India, mostly on foot alone or in company with some disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Austere and ascetic, he for many years observed vows of not touching coin, taking medicine and using any vehicle during his itineracy. On foot he travelled from the Gangotri in the Himalayas to the Ganga-Sagar, the sacred confluence of the Ganges with the Bay of Bengal. He joined the Ramakrishna Order while Swami Vivekananda had been preaching in the West and afterwards visited Khetri and some other Native States with Swamiji.

Soon after Swamiji's return from the West, he became interested in the Math work, and he took an active part in the construction works of the Belur Math, the Mayavati Advaita Ashrama, and the Benares Home of Service. He acted as the manager of the Belur Math for a number of years. He also acted in 1903 as the superintendent of the Boarding House started under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society of Calcutta. He retired from active work in about 1910 and finally came over to Benares in 1916 where he stayed continually up to the last day of his life. He was a very prominent personality in the Benares Sevashrama, and many devotees, male and female, used to visit him daily to all of whom he was a source of inspiration. He has left very interesting records of his life, which may be placed before the public in course of time.

With his passing away we have lost the oldest living member of the Ramakrishna Order and a man of varied experience who was an un-ending store-

house of stories and anecdotes, with which he used to regale us whenever we had a chance of meeting him at Benares. May his soul rest in peace!

## AN INTERVIEW WITH SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Our readers may have read the reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna as recorded by the great Bengali patriot, Aswini Kumar Datta, and published by ourselves in the February issue of 1924. Towards the end, he observes that his second meeting with Swami Vivekananda came about at Almora after the latter's first return from America. Details of that meeting were recently published in *Barisal*, a Bengali weekly, from which we cull the following.

It was some time in May or June in 1897. Swamiji was staying at Almora with Capt. and Mrs. Sevier as their guest. Aswini Babu also came to that town in course of travel. He was one day apprised by his local cook of the presence of a strange Bengali Sadhu in the town, speaking English, riding horses and moving altogether in a lordly style. He had learnt from the papers that Swamiji was then staying at Almora, and therefore had no difficulty in identifying the strange Sadhu as the warrior-monk Vivekananda. Aswini Babu went out to meet the "Hindu Warrior." Nobody could give him the address of "Swami Vivekananda". But when he enquired about the "Bengali Sadhu," a passer-by wonderingly said, "You mean the rider Sadhu? There he is coming on horseback! That is his house, Sir." Aswini Babu saw from a distance that as soon as the ochre-robed Sannyasin reached the bungalow-gate, an English gentleman came and led the horse to the door, where Swamiji dismounted and went in.

A while after, Aswini Babu went in and enquired

at the door, "Is Naren Datta here?" A young monk answered in disgust, "No, Sir, there is no Naren Datta here. He died long ago. There is only Swami Vivekananda." But Aswini Babu said he did not want Swami Vivekananda, but Paramahansa Dev's Narendra. This conversation reached the Swami's ears, and he sent for the disciple and enquired what the matter was. The young monk said, "A gentleman is enquiring about Narendra Datta,—Paramahansa's Narendra. I told him that he is dead long ago, but he might see Swami Vivekananda." The Swami exclaimed, "Oh what have you done! Just show him in." Aswini Babu was accordingly called in and found the Swami seated on an easy chair. On seeing Aswini Babu, Swamiji stood up and greeted him cordially. Aswini Babu said, "The Master had once asked me to speak to his dear Narendra. But Narendra could not speak with me much on that occasion. Fourteen years have passed by. I meet him again. The Master's words cannot be in vain." Swamiji sincerely regretted for not having been able to talk long with him on the first occasion. This astonished Aswini Babu, for he had scarcely expected that Swamiji would remember him and a few minutes' conversation held so long ago. Swamiji's memory astounded him.

When Aswini Babu addressed him as "Swamiji," he interrupted him, saying, "How is that? When did I become a 'Swami' to you? I am still the same Narendra. The name by which I used to be called by the Master is yet to me a priceless treasure. Call me by that name."

Aswini Babu: "You have travelled over the world and inspired millions of hearts with spirituality. Can you tell me which way lies India's salvation?"

Swami: "I have nothing more to tell you than what you heard from the Master,—that religion is the very essence of our being, and all reforms must come through it to be acceptable to the masses. To do otherwise is as improbable as pushing the Ganges back to its source in the Himalayas and making it flow in a new channel."

A: "But have you no faith in what the Congress is doing?"

S: "No, I have not. But, of course, something is better than nothing, and it is good to push the sleeping nation from all sides to wake it up. Can you tell me what the Congress has been doing for the masses? Do you think merely passing a few resolutions will bring you freedom? I have no faith in that. The masses must be awakened first. Let them have full meals, and they will work out their own salvation. If the Congress does anything for them, it has my sympathy. The virtues of Englishmen should also be assimilated."

A: "Is it any particular creed you mean by 'religion'?"

S: "Did the Master preach any particular creed? But he has spoken of the Vedanta as an all-comprehensive and synthetic religion. I also therefore preach it. But the essence of my religion is strength. The religion that does not infuse strength into the heart, is no religion to me, be it of the Upanishads, the Gita or the Bhâgavatam. Strength is religion, and nothing is greater than strength."

A: "Please tell me what I should do."

S: "I understand you are engaged in some educational works. That is real work. A great power is working in you, and the gift of knowledge is a great gift. But see that a man-making education spreads among the masses. The next thing is the building up of character. Make your students' character as strong as the thunderbolt. Of the bones of the Bengali youths shall be made the thunderbolt that shall destroy India's thralldom. Can you give me a few fit boys? A nice shake! can give to the world then.

"And wherever you hear the Radha-Krishna songs going on, whip right and left. The whole nation is going to rack and ruin! People having no self-control indulging in such songs! Even the slightest impurity is a great hindrance to the conception of these high ideals. Is it a joke? We have long sung and danced,—no harm

if there is a lull for a time. In the meanwhile let the country wax strong.

"And go to the untouchables, the cobblers, the sweepers and others of their kind, and tell them, 'You are the soul of the nation, and in you lies infinite energy which can revolutionise the world. Stand up shaking off the shackles, and the whole world shall wonder at you.' Go and found schools among them, and invest them with the 'sacred thread'."

Finding Swamiji's breakfast ready, Aswini Babu rose to take leave. But before going, he asked Swamiji, "Is it true that when the Madras Brahmins called you a Sudra having no right to preach the Vedas, you said, 'If I am a Sudra, ye the Brahmins of Madras are the Pariah of the Pariahs'?"

S: "Yes."

A: "Was it becoming of you, a religious teacher and a man of self-control, to retort like that?"

S: "Who says so? I never said I was right. The impudence of these people made me lose my temper, and the words came out. What could I do? But I do not justify them."

At this, Aswini Babu embraced Swamiji, and said, "To-day you rise higher in my estimation. Now I realise how you could be a world-conqueror and why the Master loved you so much!"

## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 188.)

अन्नं च भैक्ष्यसंपन्नं भुजानस्य सरित्ते ।।

मूत्रयन्ति च पापिष्ठाः घृवन्त्यस्य च मूर्धनि ।।

यतवाचं वाचयन्ति ताडयन्ति न वक्ति चेत् ।। ३६ ।।

36. When he was eating on a river-side the food he had collected by begging, the rascals defiled it abominably and spat on his head. He was observing silence,

but they made him speak, and threatened him if he did not do so.

तर्जयन्त्यपरे वाग्भिः स्तेनोऽयमिति वादिनः ॥

बध्नन्ति रज्ज्वा तं केचिद्बध्यतां बध्यतामिति ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Others rated him with harsh words, saying, "This man is a thief." Some bound him with a rope, and some said, "Kill him! Kill him!"

क्षिपन्त्येकेऽवजानन्त एष धर्मध्वजः शठः ॥

क्षीणवित्त इमां वृत्तिमग्रहीत्स्वजनोज्झितः ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Some taunted him insultingly, saying, "He is a sharper who has put on a mask of religion. Having lost his wealth and being discarded by his kinsmen, he has taken to this profession."

अहो एष महासारो धृतिमान्गिरिराडिव ॥

मौनेन साधयत्यर्थं बकवद्दृढनिश्चयः ॥ ३९ ॥

39. "Oh, he is exceptionally strong, and as steady as the Himalayas! He is firm in resolution like a heron<sup>1</sup> and seeks to gain his object by observing silence!"

[<sup>1</sup> Like a heron.—Just as a heron waits silently on the margin of a lake to catch the unwary fish.]

इत्येके विहसन्त्येनमेके दुर्वर्तयन्ति च ॥

तं बबन्धुर्निरुधुर्यथा क्रोडनकं द्विजम् ॥ ४० ॥

40. Thus did some ridicule him. Others treated him shamefully, and some bound and confined him as they do a plaything such as a bird.

एवं स भौतिकं दुःखं दैविकं दैहिकं च यत् ॥

भोक्तव्यमात्मनो दिष्टं प्राप्तं प्राप्तमबुध्यत ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Thus, whatever troubles befell him—whether<sup>1</sup> they sprang from the animal kingdom, natural phenomena, or bodily ailments—he thought they were predestined and therefore must be silently borne.

[<sup>1</sup> Whether &c.—These are the three usual divisions of human ills.]

परिभूत इमां गाथामगायत नराधमैः ॥

पातयद्भिः स्वधर्मस्थो धृतिमास्थाय सात्त्विकीम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Even though insulted by rascals who sought to lead him astray, he clung to his path of duty by practising the pure form<sup>1</sup> of steadiness, and sang this song :

[1 *Pure form &c.*—Vide Gita XVIII. 33.]

द्विज उवाच ॥

नायं जनो मे सुखदुःखहेतुर्न देवतात्मा ग्रहकर्मकालाः ॥

मनः परं कारणमामनन्ति संसारचक्रं परिवर्तयेद्यत् ॥ ४३ ॥

The Brahmana said :

43. Neither<sup>1</sup> is this body<sup>2</sup> the cause of my pleasure or pain, nor the Atman, nor the gods, nor the planets, nor work, nor Time. The only cause of pleasure and pain, the *Srutis*<sup>3</sup> declare, is the mind, which sets in motion<sup>4</sup> this cycle of transmigration.

[1 *Neither &c.*—All these items will be taken up one by one in verses 51–56.

2 *Body*—From the derivative meaning of the word, 'that which is produced.' So also in verses 51 and 54.

3 *Srutis*—c.g. *Brihadaranyaka* III. ix. 20—"Through the mind alone one sees, through the mind one hears," etc.

4 *Sets in motion &c.*—The next verse explains how.]

मनो गुणान्वे सृजते बलीयस्ततश्च कर्माणि विलक्षणानि ॥

शुक्लानि कृष्णान्यथ लोहितानि तेभ्यः सवर्णाः सृत्तयो भवन्ति ॥

44. It is the formidable mind which creates desire<sup>1</sup> and the like ; thence proceed varieties of work such as *Sattvika*, *Rajasika* and *Tamasika* ; and these lead to births of a type<sup>2</sup> which is in accordance with them.

[1 *Desire &c.*—for sense-objects.

2 *Type &c.*—Good works producing angelic bodies, bad works animal (or still worse) bodies. and mixed works human bodies.]

अनीह आत्मा मनसा समीहता हिरण्यमयो मत्सख उद्विचष्टे ॥

मनः स्वलिङ्गं परिगृह्य कामाञ्जुषन्निबद्धो गुणसङ्गतोऽसौ ॥ ४५ ॥

45. The inactive, resplendent<sup>1</sup> Self, the Friend<sup>2</sup> of the Jiva, looks on<sup>3</sup> from above while the mind works. The Jiva, however, identifying itself with the mind—which presents the world to it—is connected with works, which

belong to the mind, and in the act of enjoying sense-objects comes to be bound.

[The idea is this: The real Self never transmigrates. It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. It is only the apparent self, the Jiva, which through Nescience connects itself with the mind and goes from one body to another.

<sup>1</sup> *Resplendent*—because It is Knowledge Absolute.

<sup>2</sup> *Friend &c.*—Because the two are identical.

<sup>3</sup> *Looks on &c.*—as mere Witness, without being attached.]

**दानं स्वधर्मो नियमो यमश्च श्रुतं च कर्माणि च सद्ब्रतानि ॥**

**सर्वे मनोनिग्रहलक्षणान्ताः परो हि योगो मनसः समाधिः ॥४६॥**

46. Charity, the performance of one's duty, the observance of vows, general and particular, the hearing of the scriptures, meritorious acts and all other works—all these culminate in the control of the mind. The control of the mind is the highest Yoga.

[So one must control the mind first this is the purport of the verses 46—47.]

**समाहितं यस्य मनः प्रशान्तं दानादिभिः किं वद तस्य कृत्यम् ।**

**असंयतं यस्य मनो विनश्यद्दानादिभिश्चेदपरं किमेभिः ॥ ४७ ॥**

47. Say, of what use are charity<sup>1</sup> and the rest to one whose mind is controlled and pacified? Of what use, again, are this charity and the rest to one whose mind is restless or lapsing into dullness?

<sup>1</sup> *Charity &c.*—referred to in the previous Sloka.]

**मनोवशेऽन्ये ह्यभवं स्म देवा मनश्च नान्यस्य वशं समेति ॥**

**भोष्मो हि देवः सहस्रः सद्भोयान्युज्ज्याद्वशे तं स हि देवदेवः ॥**

48. The other Gods<sup>1</sup> are under the sway of the mind, but the mind never comes under the sway of any-one else. This is a terrible<sup>2</sup> God, stronger than the strongest, and he is the God of Gods<sup>3</sup> who can control the mind.

[<sup>1</sup> *Gods*—may also mean the organs (Indriyas). So also in verse 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Terrible*—even to the Yogis.

<sup>3</sup> *God of gods*—the phrase may also mean 'the master of all the organs.'

The Sloka (except the last foot) is a close reproduction of a verse of the Sṛuti.]



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

(ENGLISH)

THE THREE MYSTIC PATHS.—Published by the Shrine of Wisdom, Lincoln House, Acacia Road, Acton, London, W. 3. Pp. 32+32+40. Price, 4s. 6d.

The present work is a combination of three booklets dealing respectively with the Path of Devotion, the Path of Knowledge and the Path of Union by Good Works. They apparently correspond to our paths of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma, but except in the last and that partially, the identity does not go very far. The first booklet dwells on such topics as Prayer, Meditation, Contemplation, Practice of the Presence of God and Worship. The second is mainly based on the philosophy of Hermes-Trismegistus of Egypt, whose teachings find the best expression through the Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophers. The subject-matter of the third is indicated by its name. We confess, we find the treatment sketchy, as is perhaps inevitable within such limited space, and also not quite clear and well-reasoned. The get-up is excellent.

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND AND ITS CONTROL.—A Lecture by Swami Prabhavananda. Published by the Vedanta Society of Portland, 616 Kraemer Building, Second and Washington Streets, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. Pp. 16. Price not mentioned.

This nicely got-up booklet deals with the subject in a lucid and comprehensive way and is bound to prove helpful to all who are interested in the problem.

GNOSTICISM.—By Mary W. Barrie, M.A. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. Pp. 114. Price, Wrappers, Re. 1/4, Cloth, Rs. 2/-.

The book under notice contains the substance of lectures delivered in the Brahma Vidya Ashrama, Adyar, Madras, and covers such subjects as The geographical home and historical background of Gnosticism, Character-

istics of the Babylonian, Jewish, Egyptian and Grecian civilisations, The esoteric schools of the pre-Christian Gnostic period, Classification of the Gnostic sects, Life in four typical Gnostic Communities, The Gnostic Scriptures, etc. The book is full of information and will amply repay perusal. It is furnished with an appendix containing diagrams and summaries, index and bibliography.

THE HOLY LIFE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR BHAGAWAN SHRI-KRISHNA, PART III.—By S. N. K. Bijurkar, B.A., Comdapoor, South Kanara District, S. India. Price, As. -/12/-.

The name indicates the matter of the book. But to be useful, it ought to have been written with greater discrimination.

THE SIMPLE WAY OF LAO TSZE.—Published by the Shrine of Wisdom, Lincoln House, Acacia Road, Acton, London, W. 3. Pp. 56. Price 3s.

"At the same time as Pythagoras was unfolding to his disciples the Pythagoric Path to God, and as Buddha was expounding the Dharma, or Law in India, there was a third Venerable Master teaching the same Truth in China. He was Lao Tsze, and his teaching is called 'Tao-Teh King'. Lao Tsze was born in the year 604 B.C. The Teaching of Lao Tsze, though so ancient, is still quite new, and even modern." The present brochure is a free translation of the original, and is well worth perusal. Nicely done, and beautifully printed.

THE INDIAN COLONY OF CHAMPA.—By Prof. Phanindranath Basu, M.A., of the Visvabharati, Santiniketan. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 162. Price, Cloth, Rs. 2/-.

It is not generally known that our ancestors had also conquered and colonised the distant land of Champa, the southern portion of Annam in Further India. Prof. Basu's small book, published as the twelfth of the Asian Library series, furnishes a short but interesting tale of that glorious episode of Indian history. The Kingdom of Champa

flourished from the 2nd to the 14th century, being ruled by as many as twelve dynasties. The founder, as far as has been ascertained (mainly by French savants), was Sri Mára, hailing probably from the Andhradesha. He and his fellow-colonists were all Hindus, and under them and their successors, the whole land was Hinduised in culture and religion,—an achievement of which India has every cause to be proud. The book is nicely got-up and is furnished with an appendix and bibliography. Every lover of India will be profited by its perusal.

TEMPLES, CHURCHES AND MOSQUES.—By Yakub Husan. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 208. Price, Re. 1/8.

The book under review gives a Kaleidescopic view of the world's religious architecture. The author, a Muhammedan gentleman, has travelled widely and writes generally from first-hand knowledge. "He takes us through the Chaldean to Egyptian, Greek and Roman temples, through the Buddhist and Hindu monuments to the temples of the Far East in all their variety and splendour; again to Solomon's temple and the Kaaba at Mecca, to the coming of the Messiah and the magnificent cathedrals of Mediæval Europe, to the birth of Mohamed and the mosque architecture of Egypt and Turkey and Spain; to Byzantine and Saracenic styles of architecture, and finally to the beautiful Moghul architecture of Hindustan." The book is full of illustrations and is interesting.

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES AND CHRISTIANITY.—By P. O. Philip, B.A. Published by the National Christian Council, Calcutta, and the Christian Literature Society for India, Madras, Allahabad, Rangoon and Colombo. Pp. 52. Price, As. 8.

An account of the depressed classes of our country showing the wretched condition in which they are and the services rendered by Christianity to uplift them. A perusal of the pamphlet brings home to us the fact that thousands of our countrymen are embracing Christianity

forsaking the religion of their forefathers. What are we doing to stop this process? It is high time that Hinduism should be aggressive and reclaim the down-trodden masses.

THEOSOPHY AS THE BASIC UNITY OF NATIONAL LIFE.—

By Annie Besant, J. Krishnamurti, Lady Emily Lutyens and C. Jinarajadas. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 96. Price: Cloth, Re. 1/8; Board, Re. 1/-.

The book contains a series of four lectures delivered in Bombay at the Forty-ninth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, December, 1924. The four lectures are: The Real and the Unreal in a Nation's Life, The Citizen as a Divine Agent, Brotherhood as a Reality, The Spiritual Organisation of a Nation. The authors have sought to prove that Theosophy is the panacea for our national evils and when widely spread will bring about the desired unity in the country. Whether this dream will come true or not time alone can say.

CEYLON'S PLACE IN ASIAN CULTURE.—By S. T. Bharatha Nesan with a Preface by C. F. Andrews, M.A. Published by the author from the Bharatha Aham, Vaddukkoddai, Juffna, Ceylon.

The title itself suggests what the subject-matter of the pamphlet is. The writer, it seems, is a novice in the field.

RAMANAND TO RAM TIRATH (Lives of the Saints of Northern India including the Sikh Gurus). Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 256. Price, Re. 1/8.

The volume recounts the lives of some of the famous saints of Northern India, *viz.*, Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak, Ravi Das, Mira Bai, Vallabhacharya, Tulasi Das, Nanak's Successors, Guru Govind Singh, Swami Virajanand, Dayanand Saraswati, and Swami Ram Tirath. Illustrations and stray teachings of the saints inserted in the book are an interesting feature.

TOWARDS DISCIPLESHIP.—By J. Krishnamurti. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 144. Price: Cloth, Rs. 2/4; Board, Re. 1/8.

A series of informal talks to aspirants for discipleship. The get-up and printing of the book are good.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY, PART I.

—Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda. Published by Swami Santoshananda from the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 7 Halder Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 127. Price, As. -/12/-.

As has been mentioned in the Publisher's Note, "In order to bring the lofty ideas and ideals preached by Swami Vivekananda within the easy reach of all, the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta, has undertaken the publication of a series of cheap and handy books, each bearing on a particular subject and containing a good many brilliant passages selected from his speeches and writings classified under a number of interesting heads." The volume under review is the second book of the series. A look at the table of contents shows that the volume has been conveniently divided into two books, one dealing with religion in the sense of spiritual culture and illumination, the other with philosophy—God, soul, nature and eschatology. The plan of the book and the choice and arrangement of the topics show the skill and discrimination of the compiler. There is a portrait of the Swami as the frontispiece. We hope the book will have a good sale. The get-up and printing are good.

(BENGALI)

VEDANTA-PARICHAY (Introduction to Vedanta).—By Hirendra Nath Datta, M.A., B.L. Published by Phanibhusan Datta, 139 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pp. 254. Price, Re. 1/4.

The writer is well-known in Bengal as a scholar and his several works written in Bengali on Hindu philosophy and religion have deservedly obtained public appreciation.

The present work only adds to his reputation. He is one of those who have been primarily responsible for popularising Vedantism in Bengal, and we are sure "Introduction to Vedanta" will serve a real purpose. It is a collection of essays read and published on different occasions, but furnishes a connected exposition of the fundamentals of Vedantism, e.g. The Nature of Brahman, Its relation to the Universe and individuals, Maya and Prakriti, The doctrine of the Infinite, etc., etc. The delineation is punctuated by profuse quotations from standard works, is lucid, charming and convincing. The book, as its name signifies, is really only an introduction to the study of Vedanta and is well-suited for the beginners. Printing and paper fine.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE VEDANTA WORK IN NEW ZEALAND.

We have received an interesting letter from Clifton, Sumner, New Zealand, which we reproduce here :

"Many thanks for yours of your kind enquiries about our little Vedanta study class here.

"It is only a very small one—just a few educated women no longer very young, no longer satisfied with 'popular' Christianity and seeking for deeper truth whereby we may guide our lives. We are reading this year the articles by Swami Paramananda in the *Message of the East*, and we discuss freely—most of us being only just 'nibblers' at the matter. I who write met Swami Prakashananda in San Francisco, 1915, and bless the day that I did, for he taught me the beginnings of meditation. Later, I got into touch with Swami Prajnananda of Mayavati by letter. His mind touched mine so closely that it seems to me that he still teaches me, and it is partly because of him that I suggested to my friends that we should send part of our small offerings to you at Mayavati, especially, as we Westerners, you know, are well

aware of the need the body has of help! We send the rest to the Nivedita School in Calcutta. It does not seem to us right to take Vedanta help and teaching without any return. Yet money is all we can as a class offer, and not much of that either since we are none of us very well off, and all have others to help. I am myself a prison-worker, and they help me with money for that too as well as with their friendship, in which our religious studies form the deepest bond. We are very glad to hear that the little we send is useful. I can assure you it comes from hearts very willing to help according to their understanding and hands that love better to give than to get. But spiritually we are not very far on. I long for your prayers for these my friends."

The letter shows how the universal, synthetic ideas of Vedanta are slowly and silently spreading all over the world.

#### SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S RETURN TO AMERICA.

Swami Paramananda, President of the Vedanta Society, Boston, and founder of the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, who had come to India in February last, again set sail for America *via* the Pacific in May. During his short stay here he visited many places and was presented with addresses of welcome in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Dacca and other places.

His reply to the address of welcome by the citizens of Calcutta was striking. Among others he said that the root cause of the down-fall of India was that she merely offered her lip-homage to her heritage, but did not make any effort to practise it in life. He urged the audience to combine in their life the rich traditions and heritage of the past if they wanted to realise their goal. From his experience abroad, he had found that at the present time India could not keep herself isolated from the rest of the world. India must send her sons to foreign countries to study the conditions there and in a spirit of humility learn and assimilate what was best in them.

Two more Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission have accompanied Swami Paramananda for the preaching of Vedanta in the West. Of them Swami Akhilananda will most probably work with Swami Paramananda at the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, and Swami Dayananda with Swami Prakashananda, at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco. We wish the Swamis a happy and safe voyage.

#### THE OUTLOOK FOR THE WESTERN CIVILISATION.

The greatest tragedy of the Western life is that it destroyed its ideals before it discovered any new ones. Tragedy did we say?—We are at once reminded that some of our thinkers after long sojourn in the West have declared that the decadence of the Western civilisation is a myth originated from the over-sensitive mentality of some Western writers and avidly grabbed by ourselves. They say, the West is going merrily on, in spite of the last war and all spiritual and social unrest that we hear of. We do not know if Mr. Glenn Frank, the learned editor of *The Century Magazine* of New York, is one of that over-sensitive set. But the series of articles he recently contributed to his monthly on *The Outlook for Western Civilization*, reproduced in the March and April numbers of *The Calcutta Review*, indicates that the decline of the Western civilisation is not a mere myth. The Editor bases his thesis on the modern Western literature. He first considers the literature of despair, "in which many of the most astute students of contemporary affairs express the belief that we are headed toward a new dark age." This literature, he thinks, has been inspired by at least seven distinct fears, namely, the biological, psychological, political, economic, historical, administrative and moral fear. The writer believes that all these fears, except perhaps the historical, rest upon indisputable grounds. "I believe," he says, "that we shall inevitably enter a new dark age, a period in which civilised values will go into decline and the race be thrust back into the



precarious existence of its primitive ancestors, unless we begin with a decent promptness to remove the legitimate grounds for these fears."

But it will be manifestly wrong to think that the situation holds out only fear and no hope. The present difficulties of the Western civilisation are really those which attend all transitions from the old to the new. Only in the present case, they have been extremely aggravated by a wilful and ruthless destruction of the inherited regulative ideal before any new ideal has clearly emerged. The spirit of science is not yet grown strong enough to take the responsibility of guiding humanity, but in its adolescence again lies the safety and salvation of the West. Mr. Frank therefore hopes that in order to survive the present crisis the Western civilisation must, at the first instance, requisition the services of a group of men who would go, with conscientious care through the findings of all the different sciences, find their net social and spiritual contributions and thrust them into the stream of common thought and make them the basis of social action. Secondly is wanted a sort of a Ringmaster of Specialists, that is to say, a catholic-minded person, an omnivorous reader who had ranged over the whole fields of knowledge, is acquainted with the great generalisations of all the experiences of mankind, "with just enough of the alloy of mountebankery in him to enable him to touch the imagination of the masses." Mr. Frank thinks that a British Premier or an American President possessing the above qualities might light the fires of renaissance in a few brief years. And thirdly religion, for every revolution is the work of a principle, of faith in the moral order. But it cannot, of course, be the old theologies. "The task of religious leadership in the new renaissance will be to help mankind use the results of modern biology, psychology, sociology and other sciences, for the enrichment, the increase, and the moral verification of life. Whatever may be the point of departure for the next renewal of Western civilisation, and from whatever source its leadership may come, I think we know where it must

look for its sources of power—to science and religion.”

Yes, the salvation of the West lies in a science which is religion and a religion which is science.

#### PRINCE DARA'S LOVE OF VEDANTA.

It may be said that Emperor Aurangzeb not only undermined the Mughal empire, but also undid all the noble efforts of his predecessors for the union of the Hindu and Muhammadan cultures and religions. He was the antithesis of his wise great-grandfather in this respect. Akbar the Great, easily the best and the greatest of Muhammadan rulers in India, saw with his far-sighted vision the impossibility of maintaining a lasting political organisation without recognising the capabilities and the important position of the Hindus in it. He further felt that a mere external union was nothing, if it was not backed by a more real union of their cultures and religions. His matrimonial alliances with the Hindus and respect and regard for their religion and culture were obviously prompted by these considerations. His son and grandson, carrying Hindu blood in their veins, followed practically, if not explicitly, the policy of Akbar. Aurangzeb set himself deliberately against all these. And in spite of his honest industry, great administrative powers, temperate habits and scrupulous dutifulness, he caused the decline of the great empire.

In these days when the thought of communal tension and the absolute necessity of communal union for the welfare of India has made us thoughtful, the noble, but tragic memory of Prince Dara, the eldest son of Shahjahan, haunts our mind. One feels that if Dara had sat on the throne of Delhi, the sad spectacles of the present times would not have been seen, and India's history would perhaps have told a more pleasant tale. For, Akbar was, in nobility of mind and breadth of outlook, the prototype of Prince Dara, and Dara's love of Hinduism was generous and pregnant with possibilities for the Indian nation as that of Akbar himself.

The new year number of *The Prabasi*, a Bengali

monthly, edited by Sjt. Ramananda Chatterji of *The Modern Review*, contains a short but interesting article from the pen of the renowned historian, Prof. Jadunath Saikar, on Prince Dara and his study of Vedantism. The Professor says it was while Prince Dara was the Subadar of the Allahabad province that he engaged learned Pandits from Benares to translate fifty Upanishads into Persian, which he afterwards published in manuscript with a preface of his own, under the title, *The Secret of Secrets*. It is this translation which being rendered into Latin by a French soldier, reached in later days the hands of Schopenhauer and evoked from him the noble exclamation: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life—it will be the solace of my death."

Dara was an earnest seeker of truth, and having studied without satisfaction Sufism, the Bible and other scriptures from able and renowned teachers, he found, as he confessed in his preface, the fulfilment of his heart's desire only in the Vedas, and especially in their Advaitism. He was no bigot however and had an eye for religious synthesis. For, when he discovered that Sufism and Vedantism differed only in form, he composed another treatise, significantly named *The Union of Two Seas*, in which he established the truths of Advaitism in terms of Sufism. He also used to visit Hindu Yogis and enquire of them the secrets of spiritual life. But he never went against his inherited religion, for he saw no contradiction between being a Muhammadan and believing in and respecting Hinduism.

It was an evil day when Aurangzeb incited the fanatical soldiery against his eldest brother in his avarice for the royal throne, declaring him a Kaffir, a heretic. For, on that day he undid all that the wisdom of his fathers had achieved towards the creation of a united nationhood by bringing together the two great communities. This is the greatest tragedy of Aurangzeb's rule.

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निवीयत ।  
*Katha Upe. I. iii. 4.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.  
—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOL. XXXI.

JULY, 1926.

No. 7.

## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

21st January, 1921 (continued).

The conversation turned on ancient civilisations. T—— remarked that the Indian, Chinese, Egyptian and Persian civilisations were the most ancient.

*Swami* : "They hold that the present civilisation of mankind is the outcome of the evolution of the Amœba. I would tell the Americans that though we admit evolution, we yet hold that the civilised man has always existed. I would challenge them to show a single civilisation which did not result from contact with another civilisation."

*T——* : "Yes, Maharaj, the Hottentot is still the same Hottentot."

*R——* : "But it may be that a great man suddenly appeared among an uncivilised people and gave them light."

*Swami* : "But as a matter of fact, great men are

never born like that. Savage races are always found to have become civilised by contact with civilised races.

"The highest ideal of civilisation is the realisation of the Self as existing in all beings. 'He who judges of pleasure and pain everywhere by the same standard as he applies to himself, that Yogi, O Arjuna, is regarded as the highest.' That realisation, however, comes only after Nirvikalpa Samadhi."

*B*—: "But when a man has realised the Personal God in the Savikalpa Samadhi, he finds Him abiding in everything. Is not that also the realisation of Universal Oneness?"

*Swami* : "There are stages in realisation.

"Swamiji used to say that India never felt the want of the Jivan-mukta (the living-free). He said that he had himself seen at least fifteen or sixteen of them ; and that even in the darkest days of India, spiritual giants had been born."

*R*—: "Indeed a land inhabited by three hundred millions of people—and by more in the past—persistently aspiring after spiritual realisation, cannot know the want of such seers. India is, as it were, the shrine of the world, and contemplation of God its principal occupation."

*Swami* : "It was the opinion of Swamiji that all heart and no brain is preferable to all brain and no heart. He used to say that the heart accomplishes everything."

*T*—: "I do not believe in this theory "

*Swami* : "You cannot build up life without the living touch of an ideal life. The Bhagavatam is always insisting on the company of the good and the devout. Sankara has no doubt laid particular stress on the Jnana aspect. But the Vedanta also upholds the necessity of the spiritual teacher. Life can be kindled only from another life."

*T*—: "Fortunately we have the lives of Sri Rama-krishna and Swamiji and yourselves before us. Thus we can know the true ideal and the true significance of the scriptures."

*Swami* : "Indeed the lives of seers are the proof and demonstration of the scriptures."

22nd January, 1921.

In course of conversation, the Swami expressed his opinion about the Non-co-operation movement. He said :

"I do not care for either Non-co-operation or any other movement ; but whatever makes men of us, is welcomed by me. Whatsoever portion of the movement agrees with Swamiji's ideals and ideals is to be accepted. We do not approve of their unnecessarily quarrelling with the Government. As Swamiji said, we do not care who rules us, we pay taxes. Our idea is to secure freedom through moral and spiritual improvement. We do not believe that good government is the only cause of national glory, because we find that even such great sages as Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji have been born in this age. Our work is to look after the education, sanitation, and physical needs of the people. But we must protest against all injustice and oppression. Silence is as bad as approval. The Sadhu must be independent-minded. What or whom shall he fear? To truth and justice alone shall be his devoted allegiance. Does not your blood boil when you hear of women being oppressed? Gandhi was quite right in saying that the boys were cowards—the usual result of the present educational system—in not refusing to submit to the crawling order.

"How Swamiji reproved the station-master at Kathgodam when he came to remove him from a second-class compartment to make room for some Englishmen. 'Are you not ashamed', he exclaimed, 'to ask me to get down? I am Vivekananda. Ask *them* to get down!'

"Oh, had I the power, I would surely have rooted out all oppression from the world!

"I look upon Gandhi as inspired by the Divine Mother. This is my considered opinion.

"There is only a difference of degree between doing wrong oneself and not opposing it in others."

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## THE RIDDLE OF RIDDLES.

### I

Philosophy began in wonder. The primitive man saw this universe, a universe full of strange phenomena, and wondered and asked himself the question—"Whence is this universe, and how has it come into being?" To this enquiry may be traced the origin of philosophy. "Whence is this universe, and how has it come into being?"—This is indeed a riddle, and there have been various speculations and theories to solve it. It is difficult to judge which is right and which false. But this much can be said that they are all hypotheses deduced from varied data, and of them that may be accepted as satisfactory, which is rational and convincing. Leaving aside all those speculations which are childish and so absurd on the face of it, we shall consider here the theories which go by the names of the doctrines of *special creation and evolution*. For, it is under these two heads that we can put the main conclusions about the origin of the universe and of life and the species of plants and animals.

This universe, with all its nebulae, suns, stars, planets and living creatures, was created all at once, and its history is not an account of upward progress and development, but how it has preserved itself against the forces of destruction constantly at work and maintained its original status. Thus things, organic and inorganic, were created at the beginning, just as they now are, complete and full-grown, out of nothing, in a trice, by an extra-cosmic personal God, who is infinite and all-powerful, and there has been nothing like evolution. God spake, and the world started into being, and it is there as it is since. God is absolute and unconditioned; the world is relative and conditioned. This is the sum and substance of the doctrine of *special creation*, and it occurs in the

*Old Testament* and the *Zendavesta*, the sacred books of the Hebrews and the Iranians respectively.

Tested in the crucible of reason such a theory is found to be defective and fallacious. In the first place, we question—"How can something, as is required by this doctrine, come out of nothing?" The law of causality demands that every effect must have a cause. In the economy of nature that which we term as an accident is non-existent; it has neither subjective nor objective reality. It is simply a phenomenon whose cause cannot easily be traced. Of course, God, according to this theory, is the efficient cause of this universe. But what is its material cause? Secondly, the theory of special creation is anthropomorphic. For, it posits the existence of an extra-cosmic God, who fashions this world out of nothing like a human architect and rules it by whims. Such a God has as such all the failings and weaknesses of a human being in some measure. At best, He is only a magnified autocrat, guilty of partiality and injustice. For, we cannot account for the differentiation that we observe between man and man otherwise than by attributing it to God. Thirdly, there are actual evidences which go to show that this world has come to be what it now is not all on a sudden but slowly, by passing through a gradual process of evolution, extending over many ages. The structure of the earth and the remains of extinct species of plants and animals are some among the many proofs which establish the conclusion that there has been an evolution of the world from a very simple state. Besides, the various calculations, geological, physical, astronomical and the like, estimating the possible duration of organic life on earth, though divergent, require that at least three or four hundred millions of years must have elapsed since the first appearance of life here. And if this be true, it goes against the theory of special creation, which supposes that the world originated only 6000 or 7000 years before Christ.

The various evidences in support of the theory of evolution we shall consider later on in detail. But what



we have stated here is enough to show that the theory of special creation is logically and factually untenable. There have been attempts to modify and qualify this theory and make a philosophy out of it by giving an allegorical meaning to many things, which, literally interpreted, appear irrational. The theory of *logos* is an illustration in point, and there is no doubt that it is nice. "In the beginning was the reason of all things (*logos*), and the reason was in God, and was God, i.e., was the source of the creative and formative energy which evolves and sustains the world." It means that God as universal reason immanent in the world is at once the material and the efficient cause of everything, and He is not an extra-cosmic being. This is what the doctrine of *logos* propounds, and it is, strictly speaking, only a form of teleological evolution.

Now let us see what is meant by evolution. Evolution means gradual unfoldment from a crude state and progress towards an ideal of perfection yet to be realised. The students of history know that the idea of evolution is not altogether a new thing. It is as old as the Vedas. It occurs in germs in the Upanishads and in the philosophical literature of the Greeks. But it is only in modern times, specially in Western science and philosophy, that it has received a great attention and become a force proposing to change our mental outlook. Originally it was applied to the genesis of the solar system and the formation of the earth. But gradually it came to be applied to plants and animals and to man. Now it is being extended to many problems, such as language, religion, social institutions, culture etc. The fact of evolution is nowadays generally admitted, although there is a difference of opinion as to its method. And this fact implies the law of causation, which explains the present as the child of the past and the parent of the future. Evolution is therefore not a principle ; it is a process—a process of change and becoming. We can distinguish two main forms of this process according as we consider it of the nature of a machine-work or recognise a plan or purpose behind it.

The theory of mechanical evolution explains the physical cosmos and the world of living creatures as the mechanical resultant of the interaction of material particles called atoms. It does away with the operation of any design and therefore any prompting and controlling spiritual power. It makes life and mind to be the products of matter, and for explaining the world-process as a whole takes for granted some principles as postulates. First, it takes matter as self-existent in the form of atoms, moving about to and away from one another, in self-existent space. Now in infinite time, it says, an infinite number of atoms with attractions and repulsions will produce an infinite number of combinations. Of these combinations, it may be said that some at least will prove permanent for a period of time, while the rest will be destroyed. These comparatively stable combinations will be the nucleus which will form this world of ours.

The mechanical theory of *cosmological evolution* has for its basis the *nebular hypothesis* introduced by Laplace and afterwards modified in some respects by Chamberlain and Moulton. How was the solar system formed, and how has this earth become what it now is? The solar system, says the mechanical theory, was once something like a spiral nebula or a cloud of gas or dust, extremely restless, producing heat and light by mutual impact and friction. After a time the main mass of nebula became divided into several parts, and of these some got condensed into solid globes owing to the dissipation of the energy of movement and gravitation towards their centre of greatest density. In this way the sun, the planets and the satellites came into being, and the earth also being cooled off became fit for vegetable and animal growth with atmosphere, air, rain and water. But how did life originate? The mechanical theory assumes the principle of *abiogenesis* or *spontaneous generation* and explains life as a product of matter. There is now a class of synthetic chemists, who are bold enough to say that they may be able to manufacture life in the chemical laboratory in the near future. The molecules of some semi-fluid carbon

compounds coming together fortuitously formed by their actions and reactions the first globules of the protoplasm, and these globules had that co-ordination and power of the whole upon the parts in which life consists, and that power of self-multiplication by division in which growth and reproduction consist. We need not go into details. Suffice it to say that the mechanical explanation leaves everything to the mercy of chance, and thus makes organisation, life and consciousness something of the nature of clock-work, though of extreme complexity. Herbert Spencer takes up this mechanical view and builds his philosophy on it.

A critical survey and analysis will reveal that the mechanical explanation is inadequate as a theory. We cannot imagine how the exceedingly complex adaptations of means to ends which constitute a striking feature of nature, specially of organic nature, can be the outcome of blind chance. Life cannot originate from the non-living—dead, inert matter, and consciousness from the unconscious—the physical brain. As the liver secretes bile, the body cannot secrete life and intelligence. They are extremely dissimilar in nature. A living conscious organism is more than a subtle automaton. A huge locomotive, carrying thousands of human beings as passengers, runs on its path with inconceivable rapidity and tremendous noise. A crawling insect, so small that it cannot even be noticed with the naked eye from a distance of a few yards, lying on the rail ready almost to be crushed, observes the oncoming train and saves its life by stepping aside. Just compare and contrast the two cases. The one, though seemingly a powerful thing, is a machine; the other, though apparently an insignificant thing, is a living creature instinct with life and consciousness. The one is dead, dull matter, useless without intelligent guidance; the other is a manifestation of life and consciousness—a self-sufficient reality.

Life is not therefore an outcome of matter. What is it then, and how did it come to inhabit the physical

organism? This is indeed a great problem of biology. There have been various hypotheses solving the question differently. Helmholtz, Kelvin and others suggest that the first living germs have been transferred to the earth from somewhere else in the cracks of a meteorite or among cosmic dust. But this is no explanation. It simply shifts the problem of the origin of life from the earth to some distant sphere. Biologists like Charles Darwin, Lamarck and others do not bother their heads much about the first origin of life. They say that they can do without it and explain the evolution of organisms from simpler forms to more complex ones. Anyhow, we can have a speculative picture of the first living germs upon the earth or in the waters of the seas and oceans covering the surface of the earth. And these by a gradual process of evolution came to be what we now call the simplest living creatures, especially those one-celled animalcules called *protists* by Haeckel, which have not formed either into plants or animals; and these in turn gave birth to a race of one-celled marine organisms on the one side and a series of predatory creatures on the other. In this way the vegetable and the animal kingdoms became branched off, and they went on evolving along their own independent lines by division and multiplication. The *protists* are simple living particles. Although they have no cells, tissues, organs or sexes in the ordinary acceptation of these words, they are very complex in their structure and contain infinite potentialities which manifest afterwards. They evolve slowly and gradually. The history of the procession of life through ages, extremely checkered as it is, is a romantic tale and is worth study. But it will not be possible for us to note even cursorily the great stages of the process—the division into plants and animals, the formation of higher organisms, the evolution of sex, the beginning of natural death, the development of the brain, and so on,—for it is a long long tale. Any way, a look at the genealogical table shows that man is the culmination of the evolutionary process and has for his immediate ancestor the

monkey preceded by the mammals of other types, birds, reptiles etc., in order.

## SIGNS OF AN ACCOMPLISHED KARMAYOGIN.

BY SWAMI ADWAITANANDA.

Self-realisation, perfect freedom and mastery over the whole of nature, is the goal. The performance of works as a means towards that end before it is attained and as an expression of the Self after liberation has been achieved is Karma Yoga. The works of a Karma Yogin are supra-ethical. They are not to be judged by the objective tests which our externalised minds demand. The criterion is purely subjective, spiritual. The ordinary ethical distinctions made by the judgments of the stumbling human reason do not hold water in his supra-mental activities. "What is action, and what is inaction? As to this even the sages are perplexed," the Song Celestial says. Generally we follow the standards laid down by traditions, by environments and by public opinion. But it is obvious that the way of freedom does not lie in that direction. Actions actuated by mundane motives perpetuate the bondage. What is then the type of works by which we can free ourselves from the thralldom of matter, from doubt, grief and million other forms of evil and suffering? The voice of the Bhagavad Geetâ is quite explicit on the point, and that is the only voice which is completely satisfying to the human reason. No external distinctions are to be made. No work which the world requires is to be shunned. But all actions should be done with a soul in Yoga with the Divine. The shirking of work is not the way, because absolute inactivity is an utter impossibility as long as the Self has a particular name and form, either fine or gross. The soul that takes refuge in inactivity has mistaken inertia for liberation. On the contrary in the full flood of action the man who lives in the freedom of the soul is eternally at rest. "He who in action can

see inaction is the man of true discernment."✓ The complete elimination of the sense of egoism of the doer and that absolute surrender of the self to the Self is the first sign of a true Karma Yogin. His self acts as a channel for the outpouring of the Divine energy. By the unsullied purity of this consciousness and by its blazing intensity all his works are burnt up leaving not a single stain or disfiguring mark upon his calm, white, clean and pure mind.

✓ Spotless freedom from the taint of desire is the second sign. In the absence of any personal egoism desire dies of inanition for want of a basis. The outward actions of a Karma Yogin are co-extensive with life itself, but they lack the compelling force of the inferior concept and the nether will of desire. All attachment to the fruit of works is entirely given up. The fruit belongs to the Lord and is determined by Him, and not by the personal will of the doer. The work has to be done with calm deliberation, with perfect adaptation of means to ends. But it can be done with a mind fixed in Yoga and not by one led hither and thither by attractions and repulsions by the adjuncts of an impure reason or by the tremblings of an unsteady will. "Yoga is skill in action." A true Karma Yogin has no personal hopes and no personal possessions. He gladly accepts what the Divine will brings him. He asks for nothing and expects nothing. What goes away from him he allows to depart into the eternal movement without grief or attachment. He has no personal reactions in the form of passion and sin. For, sin does not consist in the outward deed but in an impure reaction of the egoistic will. The spiritual, the impersonal is always pure.

✓ Perfect equality is the third sign of a true Karma Yogin. He looks upon success and failure, honour and dishonour, pleasure and pain, with equal eyes, without any emotional disturbance. He does not ignore them. But he is above them, because he knows that he is simply an instrument in the hands of the Mighty Will. His Master with His far-seeing eye has chalked out everything, and

he has simply to carry out with unflinching loyalty His royal mandate. He has gone even beyond that distinction between sin and virtue which is so important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimise the hold of the ego. A Karma Yogin seats himself firmly in the purity and fearlessness of the Eternal Witness. The sense of sin and the sense of virtue have for him no applicability, because he has no personal ends to serve. He has no egoistic loves and hatreds. He simply carries out what the Supreme Will demands from him for the maintenance of the evolving Dharma, for the progressive march of the human race. He has no wish to injure. On the contrary a universal friendliness and compassion and an all-inclusive love, sympathy and understanding are his outstanding characteristics. But this compassion does not necessarily assume the ordinary human form of pity. Human sympathy manifests itself as a shrinking of the heart, the nerves and the flesh. A Karma Yogin, on the other hand, does not attach undue importance to the life of the body. It has for him only an instrumental value. If, therefore, at the call of duty he has to engage himself in a strife and slaughter, he accepts it with a perfect equanimity, and even in the act of killing he maintains a perfect understanding and full sympathy for those whose power of domination he has to destroy with a view to accelerating human progress. He is perfectly non-violent even though engaged overtly in the task of ruthless destruction. The assumption that an outwardly violent action is invariably the result of an inward violence is born of abysmal ignorance. Creation, preservation and destruction are all divine activities, and a real Karma Yogin can take part in any one of them as an instrument in the hands of the Master.

The fourth sign is that a Karma Yogin always enjoys a perfect inner joy and peace. He does not lean on anybody. He does not depend upon anything in the world for happiness. The ordinary mind requires some sensational support during the waking state. It tries to derive pleasure by flying from one sensation to another.

Therefore it has desires, pleasures, pains, joys, and griefs. A Karma Yogin is ever satisfied in the Self which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. He has no attachment for outward touches. Everywhere he finds the same ineffable peace and joy. Pleasant or painful sensations, the wounds of things or the wounds of friends leave him unaffected. He sees and experiences imperishable Ananda everywhere.

✓ Absolute fearlessness is the fifth sign. A Karma Yogin knows that he is the Spirit immortal, all-pervading, all-powerful and all-knowing. He is the source of all power. He is the Light of lights. He is unsustained, sustaining everything. He is the Soul in all forms. He is the Silence within the sound of life. He is eternity woven on the warp and woof of time. He is the Sum and Substance of all living things. He is the All. All is in him. He is in the Universe, the universe is in him. Fear is the outcome of ignorance, of the sense of duality, of identification with the material sheaths. He welcomes all experiences. He knows that what is affected is the body not his real Self. He does not shelter himself under false notions. He tears asunder all veils, destroys all bonds.

✓ Absence of egoism, impersonality, peace ineffable, equality and fearlessness are then the outstanding features of a real Karma Yogin. It is not absolutely necessary that a Karma Yogin should have the outward badge of renunciation. But inward renunciation or vairagya there must be. The external symbol of Sannyasa is meant only for those who want to devote all their time and energies solely to the service of humanity. For them this physical renunciation is a *sine qua non* as it gives them greater freedom of action and wider opportunities.

The Divine motives inspire and determine the entire action of a Karma Yogin. The human soul impersonal in Brahman is the pure and silent channel of Divine power. Such are the movements of a liberated soul or of an earnest Sadhaka. Such is the mental poise of an accomplished Karma Yogin. All his actions rise from a free



spirit, disappear without leaving any trace behind. They are waves on the calm and unruffled surface of the unfathomable Ocean of Consciousness.

## A PEEP INTO THE MILITARY AND CIVIL INSTITUTIONS OF AKBAR.

BY KHAGENDRA NATH SIKDAR, M.A.

History is by far the greatest teacher of the world. An analytical study of the historical phenomena of all ages and climes unfolds all the underlying causes that lead to the rise and fall of nations. India, with her chequered life, stands to-day before the world as the greatest example of how unmixed autocracy undermines the solidarity of a nation and leads to its ultimate collapse. The Hindu emperors came and went; the Mahomedans followed suit. And it is needless to state that but for the enlightened policy of some of the rulers of the two ages, the history of India of those two periods would have been an unmitigated record of intrigues, chaos, bloodshed and autocracy. But lightning flashes when clouds lour, and a saviour comes when distress is intense; so came a hero bearing "palm and spear" when India was passing through an unending series of bloody revolutions. The annals of India became illumined for a time with the dramatic appearance of Akbar whose claim to immortality is not merely his personal magnetism but his power to study political situation, insight into future possibilities and wonderful administrative genius. His crowded reign of about fifty years (from 1556 to 1605) forms a big oasis, as it were, in the desert of the Mahomedan history of India.

Akbar illustrates in his comprehensive reign the principle that even a despotic government can endure if it stands upon a strong basis of love, justice, toleration and anxious solicitude on the part of the ruler for the welfare

of the governed, but comes to grief when an unmixed high-handedness or militarism is in full play. So a careful study of Akbar's administrative system furnishes a valuable lesson to the blind autocratic rulers of the present day when the subject nations of all hapless countries are smarting under their unqualified despotism and trying to shake off the bondage of political slavery for breathing in an atmosphere of freedom and peace.

Under the bracing influence of Akbar, a man of towering personality, the civil and military institutions developed hand in hand with the growing expansion of the empire. The vigour and life which he infused into them can alone explain the firm stability of his vast territories consolidated and strengthened by his all-embracing doctrine of love and toleration, trust and sympathy. But when that spirit of love and that power of organisation were gone during the reigns of Aurangzeb and his incapable successors, the entire fabric fell to pieces.

At the apex of the government was Akbar himself who got all the strings of his policy in his own hand, and his master-spirit found expression in his laborious attention to details and in steering the ship of the state safe amidst the truculent and multifarious subjects who constantly demanded his energetic efforts and tenacious perseverance. Thus Akbar was all in all and exercised a preponderating influence upon his ministers who could do nothing but subscribe to the wishes and intentions of their monarch. He got a ministry consisting of a Prime Minister, a Finance Minister called Dewan, the Chief Bakshi and the Sadar Sudur. The main duty of the Bakshi was to keep the register of high Mansabdars, of the rules as to the grants of pay and so on ; whereas that of Sadar Sudur was mainly limited to ecclesiastical affairs. He was at the head of all the law officers and was vested with an untrammelled power in the conferment of grants of lands to be devoted to benevolent purposes.

As regards the standing army of Akbar even in its highest state of efficiency, it was not very well organised. It was not divided into bodies, each with a certain number

and with a fixed proportion of officers. The system was for the King to name officers who were called Mansabdars, and who were divided into classes of commanders of 10,000, commanders of 5,000 etc. down to commanders of ten. Each entertained a number of troops which he was especially authorised to keep, and that number was mustered and paid from the treasury. Their united quotas made the army. None but the King's sons held a rank above the command of 5,000. But later on Raja Todarmall and a few other officers were raised to the rank of the commander of 7,000. The military strength consisted mostly of the regular contingents raised and commanded by autonomous chieftains or by high imperial officials as mentioned above. It is needless to dilate upon the official titles of Mansabdar, Omra, Amir-iazam and Kanikhanan and of Amir-ul-Omra etc. Badaun, the historian, finds fault with Akbar's system of territorial commands. The Mogul officers were spread over the land, and the state taxes were granted to them in certain districts in return for the military service. The thing is that the land, specified in the "Firman" granted to the holder, rarely corresponded to the land which he actually held ; so, as a matter of fact, a great deal of malversation and corruption prevailed. Akbar investigated the whole matter and resumed the grants and made it a system as far as possible to pay his officials and commanders from the state treasury instead of making grants of lands.

Of the army the principal component force was cavalry. Elephants too constituted an important feature. But in spite of all his efforts Akbar never succeeded in securing either a totally efficient power of artillery or good infantry. His infantry was of poor quality, and he mainly relied upon his irregular horsemen. Besides these troops under Mansabdars, there was a considerable body of horsemen who took service individually and were called Ahdīs. Their pay depended on their merits. In order to check the frauds that were perpetrated upon the government by high military officials, Akbar enjoined that descriptive rolls should be systematically prepared, and

horses should be branded. But the Jaigirdars and Mansabdars were vested with unlimited civil jurisdiction. The local governor was a representative of the imperial autocrat and as such could do whatever he liked.

Akbar became fully conscious of the fact that unless he could mitigate the sufferings of the cultivators, he would not be able to gain their loving submission. Understanding that the land tax was always the main source of revenue in India, Akbar made it his object to levy a fair rent on the land, which should support the administration without unduly burdening the cultivators.

Akbar fixed a standard of mensuration and deputed persons to have a complete survey of all lands capable of cultivation within the realm. The land was divided into three classes according to the continuity or discontinuity of cultivation. One-third of the average produce of the lands formed the government demand. Thus the quantity of the produce due to the government being settled, it was next to be commuted for a money payment, and for this purpose the statements of prices current for nineteen years preceding the survey, were called for. Thus those who were unable to pay the taxes in kind could pay the same in money. All these were at first made annually. But as fresh annual rates were found vexatious, the settlement was made for ten years on the basis of the average of the preceding ten. This was a complete departure from the law of Islam, for it made no difference between the revenue raised from the Muslims and that raised from the Hindus. There was no farming of any branch of the revenue. The collectors were enjoined to deal directly with individual cultivators and not to depend upon the headman or the accountant of the village.

To complete the agricultural system Akbar made at the same time a new division of the country into portions, each yielding a crore of dams. The collectors were called Kroris or Karoris. The Karori was required to send the revenue to the Treasurer-general at the headquarters. But it was found that this arbitrary division

based upon a mathematical theory produced confusion and disturbed the ancient ways most congenial to the Hindus. So it was very soon dispensed with.

The most important reforms in fiscal administration were those effected in the 24th and 25th regnal years. Hindustan was divided into twelve provinces or Subas and the Deccan into three. Each such Suba was again divided into a certain number of Sircars, each Sircar into Parganas or Mahals; and the Parganas were aggregated into Dasturs or districts. These were not only divisions for civil and military administrations but also for the collection of the land revenue. The chief officer in each province was the Sipasalar (the title of Sipasalar was changed after Akbar into Subadar), and an additional officer was introduced under the title of Dewan for the purposes of superintending the finances of the empire. The Subadar had the complete control, civil and military, subject to the instructions of the King. Under him were the revenue functionaries and also the military commanders of districts called Foujdars or District Commanders whose authority extended over the local soldiery or militia and whose duty it was to suppress all disorders that required force within the same limits.

Justice was administered by a court composed of an officer named Mir-i-Kadl (Lord Justice) and a Kazi. The latter conducted the trial and stated the law, whereas the former passed the judgment and seemed to have the superior authority. In towns the repression of crimes and all duties of a police nature were entrusted to the Kotwal. In small places in the absence of a Kotwal the revenue officer took up the police duties upon himself. In villages the maintenance of peace fell to the share of the internal authorities. The Kotwal had also other duties to perform. He was required to see to the observance of Akbar's special ordinance and was responsible for the regulation of prices and the use of correct weights and measures etc. The leading features of the instructions to these functionaries were to temper justice with mercy.

Thus from this rapid survey of Akbar's military and

civil institutions we see that the government was carried on by a multitude of petty despots. Even Akbar's military organisation had in it seeds of decay, for he followed the practice of encumbering his army on the march with even the paraphernalia of the court and of a moving city. His guns were even weaker than those of the Portuguese. It was his lofty genius for organisation, his virile endeavour and his affectionate heart teeming with an overflow of the generous sense of toleration that kept the disruptive elements of the empire in perfect control. For a composite population like that of India, the only method of maintaining peace between sect and sect was to make the state supreme over the church. Akbar's greatness is proved by the fact that he advocated the doctrine of religious toleration at a time when wars of religion were a recent memory even in Europe. "One is almost reminded of Alfred when one reads of Akbar trying to find out the natural language of man, giving to his people translation of epics and histories written in foreign tongue and compiling a statistical records of his empire." The Moslem genius coming in close contact with the culture at Akbar's court produced a very rich literature. Just a similar intellectual result was achieved at the court of the Abbasside Kaliph when the Arab intellect came into the closest contact with Greek, Hindu and Persian thoughts.

But when that intellectual force was spent, when Akbar's successors began to ride rough-shod upon his benevolent institutions and principles and when suspicion and distrust were considered to be the most effective means of control under Aurangzeb, the disruptive forces at once began to operate, and even the vigorously centralised government of Aurangzeb could not compel the mutually repellent molecules of the body-politic to check their gyrations and submit to the grasp of the superior controlling power. Thus the vast edifice of the empire built under Akbar crumbled to pieces under his successors for their woful lack of foresight and administrative genius.

History repeats itself, and it cannot be gainsaid that the present is but a necessary sequence of the past. The history of Akbar's reign and the dissolution of the empire under Aurangzeb must be an eye-opener to all through ages to come. The short-sighted policy of Aurangzeb received its highest retribution at the hands of Nemesis, and time is not far when a similar punishment shall be meted out by the Lord to those autocrats who pursue a policy of despotism and try to stifle the noble aspirations of the down-trodden races of the world.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE WORLD-PROBLEM.

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA.

*(Continued from page 259.)*

One great legacy of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world is his broad-mindedness in religion. He was an embodiment of the ancient lore, a life into which was infused the universal spirit and character of Hinduism. "The doctrine that different creeds are but different paths to reach God" is not new in India. "But taught as this man taught it, with his strong contention that it was the actual duty of men to follow their own faith, for the world gained by many-sidedness, with his intense conviction and assurance above all that love that said of every faith, 'Bow down where others kneel, for where so many have worshipped the Lord will manifest Himself'"—it was unique in the world's history. He left every religion intact and undisturbed because he had actually realised that in reality all religions are but parts and parcels of the one Eternal Religion. In point of completeness of realisations and synthetic harmonising giving a proper place to every aspect of spiritual culture, Sri Ramakrishna surpasses all human understanding. "There was not a symbol in India that he had not

worshipped, not a worshipper, by whatever route, whose special need he had not felt in his own nature and borne till it was satisfied, not a prayer or ecstasy or vision that he did not reverence or understand." He had subjected himself to various kinds of discipline to realise the Muhammedan ideal and also the Christian idea of the Fatherhood of God. Thus he had tried every path leading to God, and he would not have been satisfied if one was left untrodden. God's book is not finished, it is a continuous revelation. He used to say that it is just as absurd to say that God the Absolute has been known and comprehended by anybody as it is to say that a mountain of sugar has been carried home by some ants to be eaten up. As water takes the shape of the vessel in which it is put, so God is like that water filling these different vessels—religions. Yet He is One, and in each case it is a vision of God. He could realise that there cannot be any religious formula to suit all men but that everyone must be the architect of his own religion. So the greater the number of sects, the more the chances of people getting a religion. All talk of atheism is because of some people not getting the truth needed by them. With this width of mind and depth of realisations he could speak to each soul in its own language and direct it towards God.

Yet this great man was not blind to the fact that religious liberalism is apt to degenerate for want of intensity. It is the harmonious blending of this width and intensity of religious feeling that is required, and the way to it he found in the doctrine of *Ishta*, the chosen ideal. This he used to explain by the story of the mother-of-pearl which floats on the surface of the sea to catch a drop of rain water when the star Swati is in the ascendant, and which as soon as it gets it dives deep and prepares the pearl out of it. The growing plant has to be hedged round for protection, was another of his oft-repeated sayings. He was not for that kind of liberalism which makes people feed their curiosity with ever new ideals. One of his parables would make it clear to us



how we are to harmonise this width of religious feeling with intensity. The daughter-in-law of the family, he used to say, loves every member of the household, but for her husband she has a peculiar and intense love.

He realised that greed for money and the idea of sex are the two obstructions towards God-realisation. These he was determined to root out. He would not touch a coin, he renounced it. To get fixed in this idea he would sit by the side of the Ganges with a coin in one hand and clay in the other, and saying, "Coin is clay, clay is coin," would throw both into the river. The idea became so ingrained in him that in after-life if anybody touched him with a coin when he was asleep, his body would become bent as if it were paralysed. In these days of mad race for possession and needs beyond necessities, this sounds like a tale from the Arabian Nights. Yet it was too true. Next, he would root out the sex-idea, and in order to do this he looked on every woman as the manifestation of the Divine Mother. To perfect himself in the idea he tried to realise the feminine ideal in his male body. He thought himself to be a woman and "made every detail of their lives his own till at last he attained the secret victory in the path of womanhood." Men found in him the perfect manifestation of manliness; women on the other hand found in him all the soft feelings peculiar to their sex and mixed with him as if he was one of them. This harmonious blending of these opposite sides of human nature was so perfect that once one of his disciples asked him—"Sir, are you a man or a woman?" And Sir Ramakrishna replied smilingly—"Well, I don't know myself."

His married life was unique, having not the least touch of carnality. For had he not worshipped his wife as the manifestation of the Divine Mother offering at her feet the fruits of long years of penances and austerities? He lived with his wife, looked after her spiritual training and, what is more wonderful, after all the training required to make her a good housewife—

to the minutest detail, for to him spirituality did not mean want of practicality. "To be religious it is not necessary to be a fool and get duped in this world" was the sharp remark he once made to one of his disciples who had bought for him a frying pan which happened to be damaged. Except when he was in a deep trance Sri Ramakrishna was never forgetful like ordinary men, who when they become a little meditative forget everything else and cannot even keep their things in order. There was a sense of orderliness about him to the extent of an art—a faculty, which was highly developed in him. He used to say that none can become spiritual without this faculty. Art and religion were different ways of expressing the one truth.

He was so humble that he seemed to have forgotten that Sri Ramakrishna ever lived. In spite of his great wisdom he could never put up with the epithets—"Master" or "Guru." To get rid of the pride of birth he would go at midnight to the house of a Pariah and with his long hair sweep and wipe the latter's latrine, saying, "O Mother, make me the servant of the Pariah, make me feel that I am ever lower than the Pariah, the most despised of society." He, the Brahmin of Brahmins, would eat of the remains from off the plates of beggars fed at the temple, thinking them as the sacramental food offered to Narayana. These practical lessons in love and humility in these days of tall talk about charity and equality would go farther than anything else to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.

What is the secret in the life of this great man which enabled him to harmonise all the apparent contradictions? The secret lies in the fact that he had realised that Unity which, to use his own words, is the last word of religion, wherein lies the true explanation of life. "There is only one Being, one Existence. He is the reality in nature. He is the Soul of your soul. Nay more, you are He, you are one with Him." That is what Advaita says, Sri Ramakrishna realised this truth, and to him there was no fear, conflict, strife

or hatred which can arise only in a world of duality. He saw the one God manifesting in every thing. To him all living beings were little bits of that Infinite Ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. The Personal God was as true to him as anything in this relative world—the highest reading of the Infinite through the senses by man. Such a Personal God appeals to reason. "Though we are one with the Brahman, yet as manifested beings we are separate, His slaves, His worshippers. So prayers remain, and in fact everything in this relative world remains, and religion is made to stand on a better basis." Science wants to explain the particular through the general, and here we have all the particulars from man up to God explained through Brahman, the ultimate generalisation. Such a religion would be quite acceptable to the modern intellectual man.

The advent of Sri Ramakrishna has brought a new life-current in religion. Texts which were difficult of access for want of clearness have once more become as clear as daylight. "He was the verification of the ancient texts which one's heart and reason demands. He was a reality which books only brokenly described." The world is being silently influenced by the unprecedented perfection, kindness and love of this great soul. The hope that religion would die a natural death seems to be a vain one. Already a religious feeling in the widest sense is stirring the very depths of society all the world over. It is beginning to realise that religion is indispensable for human progress. The various social movements like socialism etc. are but the crude manifestations of this religious feeling inside, give it whatever name you like. At no distant time will nations temper their materialism with religion, bring their unbalanced activity and restlessness under control and become heirs to immortal bliss and peace. The life of this great saint is getting control of the thought-world and is moulding it after its own fashion.

The impetus he has given to society by his life is sure to be of immeasurable social significance. Consider-

ing the conditions of the age, its corruptions, one can fairly judge that it will be a long time, probably centuries, before we can have any idea of its influence. His ideal of renunciation would once more fill the land, nay, the world with forest retreats and Ashramas as of old, where men and women will live devoted to Truth and Truth alone, not performing for society any so-called useful work, yet working out the salvation of the world by their penances, fasts and prayers. Thus would culture be handed from one generation to another. The ideal of service and the universal love at the back of it would ring the death knell of all communal dissensions and racial hatred, for none—whatever his nationality, colour or creed—would be an alien to such love. The modern high aspirations like those of the League of Nations dwindle into nothingness before these ideals of service and love. Every one would be equal in this Divine love and peace would reign once more on this earth. To India his life has a special significance. "He has lived in one life the whole cycle of the national existence in India. He is the embodiment of India of the past and of India that is to be." The new spiritual renaissance brought into existence by this great life and especially the accepting of Christianity and Islam by him would once more make India—a land of different races and a hundred sects—into a united single nation. And the world would see the birth of a new age of civilisation as this life has supplied the motive-power and thought required for it.

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## THE MESSAGE OF RABINDRANATH.

BY HARIPADA GHOSHAL, VIDYABINODE, M.A., M.R.A.S.

No poet has ever achieved in his own life-time such a world-wide recognition, popularity and appreciation—perhaps no writer has attained such a stupendous literary success among alien nationalities—perhaps no thinker has ever been hailed with so much delight, wonder and admiration in various climes as the harbinger of peace and good-will among different races throughout the length and breadth of the civilised world as the greatest of our national poets—Rabindranath Tagore. He has been moving from land to land as a mighty force—as the embodiment of the poetic mind of the Orient. He is a powerful interpreter of the Eastern mind to the blind nations of the earth—the representative poetic genius of the hitherto sleeping Orient. He holds aloft the banner of Truth—carries the torch of knowledge wherever he goes to dispel prejudice and narrowness, breaking down the adamant barriers of chauvinism and shattering the steel-frame of national arrogance.

Volumes have been written on the poet by good many able men, both in India and elsewhere. The present article is an humble attempt to show the poet's message to the world.

Rabindranath has turned his hand to everything both in prose and verse, and in almost everything he has come out best. Rabindranath is a poet—an out and out poet of the highest order. A superb sense of harmony—a dazzling, all-comprehensive imagination—a genial humour—a searching character study—and above all, an air of other-worldiness—all are combined in his single person. Shakespeare is great and greater than any poet, ancient and modern, in character painting, in the searching analysis of the inner motives of human nature.

Kalidas is the full-welling fountain-head of beauty and melody and unsurpassed in brilliant powers of description. But Rabindranath is the meeting-ground of the passionate sensuousness of Kalidas and the inner vision of Shakespeare. Rabindranath's Pegasus is never chained to the ground—it flaps its wings in the super-sensuous region where skyey influences purge off sordidness from all spheres of human activity. The flowers of fine poetry that have blossomed in the garden of his mind are ever golden-hued and charming like the roses of June. His prodigious poetic genius is alive to the finger-touch of all outward agencies. He is a consummate master of all the heights and depths of thought, he twirls on his fingers the golden key that opens the door to the eternal verities of life. He weaves the magic web of life with the filmy threads of sparkling ideas. His genius finds nothing too small, or too grand for his contemplation. He thinks everything, he writes everything that can be thought and written on a subject that fires his imagination or takes his fancy.

The friendly association of the human race in both the hemispheres appears as a chimera—a quixotic project to diplomats and statesmen in the field of practical politics. Rabindranath's poetic vision is not blurred with the difficulties in the way. In the evening of life, the poet has been moving in different lands with his mission, calling nations to gather together under the banner of knowledge he has held aloft, as it is not possible for all nations to assemble under one political standard. He wants a thorough mutual understanding—a complete interpenetration of ideas and not a barren interchange of common courtesies. The individual decays and dies, but the race is eternal: humanity advances, though particular races drop down here and there in the great race of life and progress. The Orient is the cradle of the oldest civilisations, the nurse of the earliest law-givers and reformers. The Occident is the breeder of manly sentiments and heroic virtues—the land of concentrated energy and specialised knowledge. The broad

Chinese wall of narrow patriotism separates the two worlds. Rabindranath wants to bridge the yawning gulf between the two civilisations. He sees, as the thinkers of old saw, a cosmic development of one Ideal out of the seemingly chaotic commingling and clashing of interests and ideals, and thus like a master engineer, he stands with the pick-axe of culture to open up communication by cutting through the isthmus and letting the two oceans flow into each other's bosom. He has been called a visionary and a dreamer, but all men who have left behind a lasting impression on mankind have been considered wild visionaries by the so-called practical men of their times. The electric touch of his genius revivifies even dry mummies. He has been called a mystic, and a mystic he is no doubt. To a superficial reader or a hard critic who judges the productions of highly intellectual minds by some fixed canons and defined rules, he may appear unintelligible. For the worldly-wise, the bread-and-butter philosophers, utilitarians or case-hardened Philistines cannot realise the intensity of a soul all aglow with fervour—a mind burning with impetuous thoughts and emotions welling up with a tremendous force. Rabindranath is deep—he is profound—he is transcendental. His poetic vision transcends the bounds of our knowledge and is as limitless, majestic and free as the sea. But in this lies the secret of his poetry. It is the golden key with which he opens and exhibits the palace of Eternity—the Super-soul which pervades the world of sense and transcends it. To a thoughtful man, this mysticism is a charm, an attraction, a fascination. It weaves a magic web round the cold realities of his life and clothes it with all the charm of witchery. It unfolds the consciousness of his purity and the godliness of his nature which is encrusted with evanescent accretions of earthly existence. It illumines the dark recesses of his heart with a genial mild ray.

The novelty of the poet's style is another barrier to the clear understanding of his writings. In no case the

saying "the style is the man" is more applicable than in the case of Rabindranath. The vehicle of expression naturally adapts itself to the thoughts surging and boiling within. Freedom in thought seeks a free expression, an expression which bursts forth with a dynamic force, breaking all bounds and flowing on with an impetuosity all its own. It is like a cataract that gushes forth from the full-welling fountain-head of a gigantic mind. He is a consummate master of style. There have been vain imitations. It is both a delusion and snare to literary quacks. Its simplicity attracts men of little judgment, who try their hand and make aping gestures only to show the futility of their attempt and the loftiness of their model. He who dares to enter within his "magic circle" is beguiled.

Rabindranath's genius is many-sided. In satire he has shown an extraordinary power. He is humorous but his humour is devoid of the poisonous sting. It is not bitter, it is not biting, scathing or galling to any one. Good sense and good taste are found all through. He has also written some excellent critiques. He scans, analyses and lays bare the hidden beauty or fault of a thing. He strikes, but his strokes are mild. He possesses a wonderful power of synthetical treatment as of analytical handling of facts.

In lyrical dramas Rabindranath strikes a quite different chord of his lyre. The real "lyric of love and life" is to be found in them. A play like *Chitra* is a fine specimen of this art. In it he has combined a superb sense of harmony with a sensuous exposition of one of the most elemental passions and one of the most fundamental sentiments of human life. It is an apotheosis of sex-instinct and sex-relation. Without being didactic, the poet incidentally solves a great question, one of the profoundest physiological questions of the fundamental nature of love. Each of his lyrical plays hinges upon a single idea. Everywhere a single sentiment is wrought into a full-throated song. The whole atmosphere glows with passionate desires and is



lit up with a gleam of light. But he does not harp on the same string. Variety is his mode, freedom is his very being, freshness is his very nature. He is ever-new. His *Phalguni*, his *Muktadhara*, and his latest production *Kaktakarabi* are triumphant manifestations of the growth and unfoldment of his inexhaustive mind.

Rabindranath's short stories are so many prose idylls. He is an adept in the art of story-writing. His longer works in prose may be defective or faulty in some respects, they may lack unity, they may be diffusive. But his short stories are so many jewels of literary art. They are fine and picturesque. In them his character painting and psychological insight into human nature display another aspect of his genius.

Last of all, Rabindranath's poems are the consummation of his large and comprehensive soul. Imagination and sense of beauty are the *sine qua non* of high poetry. He is imagination all compact. His flight of fancy has awakened the highest mystical ecstasies in him. From a purely human and secular impulse, he has risen step by step to the supersensuous, and his passionate quest of the sensual love has been spiritualised. "The sensuous element is lifted by pure joy and emotion into the spiritual world and there transfigured; and when the spiritual element is brought into the sensuous till it is made, as it were, palpable, embodied, incarnated, when both sense and spirit are fused into one fire," says Stopford Brooke. Rabindranath's high sense of beauty has led him to the highest embodiment of all beauty—the other-worldly and transcendental Truth. The material is shorn of its earthiness and impurity. In this Rabindranath delivers his message—his message of harmonisation, the mingling of the sensuous with the spiritual. But how can this fusion of matter with spirit be brought about? No one can deny the existence of beauty and love in creation. Go wherever you may, see, touch and feel whatever you like in this material universe, you will realise, if you are susceptible enough,

the pervading spirit of God in His mundane creation. This intense longing leads us on to the City of God. This emotional outburst breaking the bonds of the flesh is called idealism or romanticism in art and literature, and in religion and spiritual experiences, transcendentism or mysticism. Call it Spiritual Union or Self-realisation or whatever you like, it is the inevitable result, the consummation of highly intense and spiritual minds. It is the soul's intercourse with the Transcendental. This God-intoxication, this drinking deep of the supernal bliss—this mystical ecstasy is Divine Union and Infinite Love of the seers of transcendental truths. The Highest Bliss is ever manifesting itself through the creation, through the beauty of the golden sun in the morning, the rosy flower, love for our dearest ones, the weal and woe of everyday life. None are so dull, none so insensate as not to feel the captivating joy of nature. In this way, He is manifesting His Ananda or Highest Bliss to all, otherwise this Ananda would not have smitten the chords of our heart. When love is awakened, we get a glimpse of the Infinite. So the gulf between the Finite and the Infinite is bridged over with Love. The taste of the Infinite in the finite Rabindranath shares with many ardent souls in the arena of world-culture. But Rabindranath has gone a step further. Not that the Finite is ever on a quest—not that man only is ever impregnated with an insatiable thirst for joy—not that the knots of his heart and the shackles of his mind are unfastened, but that the Infinite Love also is manifesting itself in random things that lie around us—in the "wide commonality" of the earth. He wants Me as much as I want Him. He and I are complementary and supplementary to each other. He cannot do without Me, as I cannot do without Him. He is as much on a quest for Me as I am for Him. Here let us quote Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar's beautiful translation of some of Rabindranath's lines:

"E'er and oft do Thy melodies vibrate  
Deep in the grove of mine innermost being ;

Ever and oft is Thy throne resplendent  
 Wide on my beautiful lotus of heart .  
 By the odours of Thine aëther charm'd  
 Does my soul sojourn in this lovely earth ;  
 Ever and oft with the dusts of Thy feet  
 Do I deck my limbs for garment's sake.  
 The skies throughout do I find unobscur'd  
 The ruling presence of Thy silent smile ;  
 Ever and oft do all vanities mine  
 Before Thy glories recoil guilty 'sham'd.  
 Discords vanish at Thy propitious call  
 Through Thy music comes grace o'er heart and all."

Here we see that Neo-Platonists like Plotinus are one with the monism of the Vedantists. Here the Orient shakes hand with the Occident, and this "union with the Ultimate Principle" is the high tableland on which man, shorn of the encrustations of artificial bondages and age-long narrow prejudices, and armed with knowledge, may stand, and "stretch out his realm amidst the stars"

The dissemination and spread of these ideas, the interpretation of the mind and culture of India in the West through the fine instrument of poetry, is Rabindranath's message and mission. The more his writings and poems are translated, widely read and appreciated in the West, the better for the world. He more than any other man has captured the mind of the West, and like an "ethereal minstrel," like a "pilgrim of the sky," has, on the wings of his burning imagination, contributed to the widening of the world's horizon, and lifted man out of the dust of the ground—out of the convention-rooted, prejudice-ridden earth.

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## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 277.)

अन्नं च भैक्ष्यसंपन्नं भुञ्जानस्य सरित्तटे ॥ ३५ ॥

मूत्रयन्ति च पापिष्ठाः श्लीवन्त्यस्य च मूर्धनि ॥

यतवाचं वाचयन्ति ताडयन्ति न वक्ति चेत् ॥ ३६ ॥

35-36. When he was eating on a river-side the food he had collected by begging, the rascals defiled it abominably and spat on his head. He was observing silence, but they made him speak, and threatened him if he did not do so.

तर्जयन्त्यपरे वाग्भिः स्तेनोऽयमिति वादिनः ॥

बध्नन्ति रज्ज्वा तं केचिद्बध्यतां बध्यतामिति ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Others rated him with harsh words, saying, "This man is a thief." Some bound him with a rope, and some said, "Kill him! Kill him!"

क्षिपन्त्येकेऽवजानन्त एष धर्मध्वजः शठः ॥

क्षीणवित्त इमां वृत्तिमग्रहीत्स्वजनोज्झितः ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Some taunted him insultingly, saying, "He is a sharper who has put on a mask of religion. Having lost his wealth and being discarded by his kinsmen, he has taken to this profession."

अहो एष महासारो धृतिमान्निरिडाडिव ॥

मौनेन साधयत्यर्थं वक्वद्दृढनिश्चयः ॥ ३९ ॥

39. "Oh, he is exceptionally strong, and as steady as the Himalayas! He is firm in resolution like a heron<sup>1</sup> and seeks to gain his object by observing silence!"

[1 Like a heron—just as a heron waits silently on the margin of a lake to catch the unwary fish.]

इत्येके विहसन्त्येनमेके दुर्वर्तयन्ति च ॥

तं बबन्धुर्निरुधुर्यथा क्रीडनकं द्विजम् ॥ ४० ॥

40. Thus did some ridicule him. Others treated him shamefully, and some bound and confined him as they do a plaything such as a bird.

एवं स भौतिकं दुःखं दैविकं दैहिकं च यत् ॥

भोक्तव्यमात्मनो दिष्टं प्राप्तं प्राप्तमबुध्यत ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Thus, whatever troubles befell him—whether<sup>1</sup> they sprang from the animal kingdom, natural phenomena, or bodily ailments—he thought they were predestined and therefore must be silently borne.

[<sup>1</sup> *Whether &c.*—These are the three usual divisions of human ills.]

परिभूत इमां गाथामगायत नराश्रमैः ॥

पातयद्भिः स्वधर्मस्थो धृतिमास्थाय सात्त्विकीम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Even though insulted by rascals who sought to lead him astray, he clung to his path of duty by practising the pure form<sup>1</sup> of steadiness, and sang this song :

[<sup>1</sup> *Pure form &c.*—Vide Gita XVIII. 33.]

द्विज उवाच ॥

नायं जनो मे सुखदुःखहेतुर्न देवतात्मा ग्रहकर्मकालाः ॥

मनः परं कारणमामनन्ति संसारचक्रं परिवर्तयेद्यत् ॥ ४३ ॥

The Brahmana said :

43. Neither<sup>1</sup> is this body<sup>2</sup> the cause of my pleasure or pain, nor the Atman, nor the gods, nor the planets, nor work, nor Time. The only cause of pleasure and pain, the *Srutis*<sup>3</sup> declare, is the mind, which sets in motion<sup>4</sup> this cycle of transmigration.

[<sup>1</sup> *Neither &c.*—All these items will be taken up one by one in verses 51--56.

<sup>2</sup> *Body*—From the derivative meaning of the word, 'that which is produced.' So also in verses 51 and 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Srutis*—e.g. *Brihadaranyaka* III. ix. 20—"Through the mind alone one sees, through the mind one hears." etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Sets in motion &c.*—The next verse explains how.]

मनो गुणान्वे सृजते बलीयस्ततश्च कर्माणि विलक्षणानि ॥

शुक्लानि कृष्णान्यथ लोहितानि तेभ्यः सवर्णाः सुतयो भवन्ति ॥४४॥

44. It is the formidable mind which creates desire<sup>1</sup> and the like ; thence proceed varieties of work such as Sattvika, Rajasika and Tamasika ; and these lead to births of a type<sup>2</sup> which is in accordance with them.

[1 *Desire &c.*—for sense-objects.

2 *Type &c.*—Good works producing angelic bodies, bad works animal (or still worse) bodies, and mixed works human bodies.]

अनीह आत्मा मनसा समोहता हिरण्यो मत्सख उद्विचष्टे ॥

मनः स्वलिङ्गं परिगृह्य कामाञ्जुषन्निबद्धो गुणसङ्गतोऽसौ ॥ ४५ ॥

45. The inactive, resplendent<sup>1</sup> Self, the Friend<sup>2</sup> of the Jiva, looks on<sup>3</sup> from above while the mind works. The Jiva, however, identifying itself with the mind—which presents the world to it is connected with works, which belong to the mind, and in the act of enjoying sense-objects comes to be bound.

[The idea is this : The real Self never transmigrates. It is Existence Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. It is only the apparent self, the Jiva, which through Nescience connects itself with the mind and goes from one body to another.

1 *Resplendent*—because It is Knowledge Absolute.

2 *Friend &c.*—Because the two are identical. He is also the Antaryamin or Indwelling Ruler.

3 *Looks on &c.*—as mere Witness, without being attached.]

दानं स्वधर्मो नियमो यमश्च श्रुतं च कर्माणि च सद्गुणानि ॥

सर्वे मनोनिग्रहलक्षणान्ताः परो हि योगो मनसः समाधिः ॥४६॥

46. Charity, the performance of one's duty, the observance of vows, general and particular, the hearing of the scriptures, meritorious acts and all other works—all these culminate in the control of the mind. The control of the mind is the highest Yoga.

[So one must control the mind first—this is the gist of verses 46 and 47.]

समाहितं यस्य मनः प्रशान्तं दानादिभिः किं वद तस्य कृत्यम् ॥  
असंयतं यस्य मनो विनश्यद्दानादिभिश्चेदपरं किमेभिः ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Say, of what use are charity<sup>1</sup> and the rest to one whose mind is controlled and pacified? Of what use, again, are this charity and the rest to one whose mind is restless or lapsing into dullness?

[1 Charity &c.—referred to in the previous Sloka.]

मनोवशोऽन्ये ह्यभवं स्म देवा मनश्च नान्यस्य वशं समेति ॥

भीष्मो हि देवः सहस्रः सहीयान्युज्ज्याद्वशे तं स हि देवदेवः ॥

48. The other gods<sup>1</sup> are under the sway of the mind, but the mind never comes under the sway of anyone else. This is a terrible<sup>2</sup> god, stronger than the strongest, and he is the god of gods<sup>3</sup> who can control the mind.

[1 Gods—may also mean the organs (Indriyas). So also in verse 52.

2 Terrible—even to the Yogis.

3 God of gods—the phrase may also mean 'the master of all the organs.'

The Sloka (except the last foot) is a close reproduction of a verse of the Sruti.]

तं दुज्यं शत्रुमसहवेगमरुतुदं तन्न विजित्य केचित् ॥

कुर्वन्त्यसद्विग्रहमत्र मर्त्यैर्मित्राण्युदासीनरिपून्विमूढाः ॥ ४९ ॥

49. There are some foolish people who, without conquering that invincible foe, whose onset is unbearable and who pierces the very vitals of a man, are for that very reason<sup>1</sup> engaged in vain quarrels with mortals here, and (in the course of it) convert others into friends, or neutrals or enemies.

[1 For that very reason—Because they have not controlled the mind.]

देहं मनोमात्रमिमं गृहीत्वा ममाहमित्यन्धधियो मनुष्याः ॥

एषोऽहमन्योऽयमिति भ्रमेण दुरन्तपारे तमसि भ्रमन्ति ॥ ५० ॥

50. Foolish men, coming to look upon the body, which is but a phantasm of the mind, as 'I and mine,'<sup>1</sup> and thinking erroneously, "Here am I, but this other man is different," wander in a limitless wilderness of ignorance.

1 I and mine—applied respectively to their own bodies and those of their near and dear ones.]

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

(ENGLISH).

**PESSIMISM AND LIFE'S IDEAL :—**The Hindu Outlook and a Challenge (with a Criticism of Life and an Interpretation of History).—By Kamakhya Nath Mitra, M.A. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 46. Price As. 8.

This essay originally appeared in *The Vedanta Kesari*, and is the author's own amplified version of an article contributed to a Bengali monthly. It created quite a commotion among the Bengali readers when it first appeared, and it is but natural that it did so. For the writer, who is the Principal of a first-grade college in Bengal and has therefore ample opportunities of knowing the thought-movements of the intelligentsia, expressed himself rather counter to the prevalent ideas and that with a strength and understanding not common among our thinkers.

Mr. Mitra's plea is that Pessimism instead of being a sad doctrine, is the only true interpretation of life, that only on the basis of this doctrine can we have real morality and understanding and realisation of truth, and that from it alone follow all noble and great deeds. He believes that Pessimism is the real Indian outlook, and that Optimism and Meliorism take us nowhere. The case for Pessimism has been presented with extreme ability and originality of conception and interpretation, and extreme felicity of expression. We strongly recommend this able and original essay to the best attention of every thoughtful man.

**THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS :—**By Santosh Kumar Das, M.A.. To be had of The Book Company, 4/4A, College Square, Calcutta, pp. XXV & 164. Price Rs. 2.

The book has grown out of a lecture which the author delivered on the subject to a select audience in



Calcutta in the month of November, 1922. He furnishes a statement of the problem first,—the need of a King Arthur idea and ideal to gather the warring knights into a Round Table of world-chivalry—then a synopsis of the contributions from the earliest time of history to its solution in the present form of a League of Nations. The League articles have been discussed and also given in the Appendix. The author also embodies in the book a summary of the League's work up to the Fourth Assembly. Apart from minor details, e.g. his apportionment of the last war guilt, and his castigation of nationalism, we do not find ourselves sharing the author's enthusiasm for the League-idea.

We believe, inasmuch as the League is essentially a political institution, it cannot serve the cause of peace. The trouble with the present-day world is not the want of a political machinery, but faith in the nobler ideals, in truth, benevolence, justice, purity and spirituality. However fine and perfect the political machinery, unless the persons guiding and controlling it are better and nobler men it will avail little. Having better men and the recognition of higher ideals in society and politics, we do not need any League. Failing to have them, the League becomes a potent instrument in the hands of mischievous politicians for the exploitation of the weaker nations. We feel that the world should have peace. But we do not look for it from the politicians, but from persons who have found eternal peace in their hearts.

The author, however, has presented his case ably, and the book will be very helpful to those who would like to study the problem and history of the League of Nations. The author promises well, and we expect many more things from him.

YOUTH AND NATION:—By T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 34. Price As. 4.

This is the first pamphlet of the Greater India Series and is dedicated with affectionate reverence to Sadhu Hirananda, the "Young Pioneer of Sind." At the outset

the author asks the youth of the country in a passionate poem to awake and fulfill their God-given mission. "India's youth," he says, "can do much—can initiate a creative crisis,—if they resolve to be New Men. An All-India League of Youth is needed. It can abolish drink, spread Swadeshi, open up centres of education in villages, improve sanitation in rural areas, distribute medicines among the village-folk and rescue thousands in the malarial season, introduce cottage industries, elevate the untouchables, carry to millions the message of India and of India's faith in the eternal values of life." The book ends with an appreciation of Sadhu Hirananda.

CASTE AND OUTCAST :—By Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Published by E. P. Dutton and Co., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York, U.S.A. Pp. 303. Price not mentioned.

A very interesting book containing some snapshot pictures of the Hindu Society and of American life. The first part *Caste* tells you among other things how the Hindu children play, what the daily routine of their mother is, and above all how some of the important socio-religious customs and ceremonies of the Hindus are observed. The second part *Outcast* depicts some aspects of the American Society. As the book has been written from first-hand knowledge, there is a peculiar charm about it. The introduction of dialogues throughout has specially made the pictures drawn vivid and life-like. The wide popularity of the book which has within the space of two or three years gone through the fifth impression speaks of its merit. The get-up and printing are excellent.

GLIMPSES OF AMERICA :—By Dr. Sudhindra Bose. Published by M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Harrison Road, Calcutta. Pp. 249. Price Rs. 3.

Dr. Bose, Lecturer in Political Science at the State University of Iowa, U. S. A., is a man of varied experience. So his writing has a value of its own. In the book before us one gets a glimpse of some of the best phases of American life. Abraham Lincoln—The Prophet of

Democracy, American Education that Educates, An Hour with a World-famous American Explorer, How America Cares for the Children, A Welfare Research Station, An American View of Mahatma Gandhi, American Christianity, The Teaching of Government in an American University and such others are the topics dealt with. Some of the chapters originally appeared in *The Modern Review*, *The Hindustan Review*, *The Indian Review and Welfare*. The book is full of illustrations, and the style is beautiful. It will, we are sure, be welcomed by the general public.

**WITNESS OF THE ANCIENT :—**By T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh and Co., Madras. Pp. 30. Price As. 4.

This is the second pamphlet of the Greater India Series and is dedicated to Upadhyaya Brahmabandhava of Bengal. It opens with a poem in which the author asks: "Which God will ye worship, my comrades?" And he places before his country-men several ideals of Godhood, the last and the truest being the "Greater God who is abroad to commune with Man, Bird and Beast." India stood witness to that ideal, and the children of the land to be faithful to the ancient traditions should strive after its realisation and bring it within the easy reach of the warring nations of the West.

**MY BROTHER'S FACE :—**By Dhan Gopal Mukherji. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York. Pp. 367.

The author is resident in America and has already acquired reputation as an author. Three or four years ago he returned to India for a short visit, and the result of experiences then is the present book. He found in the face of his brother not the man, but the secret of India. Hence the title of the book. The beginnings of the revolutionary movement, the effects upon it of the world-war, the power of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings, the characterisation of a Hindu saint,—all these are portrayed here in a beautiful, poetic and lucid style. The English is perfect and narration enthralling. But we must

confess that fancy and imagination have mixed so profusely with facts in the narrative that the book has become a rather unsafe guide for the understanding of India.

(BENGALI).

SADHAK KAMALAKANTA.—By Atul Ch. Mukhopadhyay. Published by the Ripon Library, Dacca. Pp. XIV+XVIII+402. Price, Rs. 3/-.

The book under review narrates the life of Kamalakanta, though meagrely, and contains his poetical writings as well as his Kali and Siva songs. Kamalakanta, like the well-known Ramprasad, was a great worshipper of Mother Kali and is said to have attained great occult powers. He was extremely devotional in temperament, as his deservedly popular songs testify. He came from Burdwan and was intimately connected with the Raj family of the same place, some of whom were greatly attached to him for his wonderful character and spirituality. The author has spared no pains to make the book as interesting as possible. Besides, by his collection of Kamalakanta's songs which form almost half of the volume, he has fulfilled a real want of devotees as also of the Bengali literature. The book is well got-up and illustrated. We hope it will be appreciated by all readers of Bengali devotional literature.

VEDANTA DARSHANER ITIHASA (The History of the Vedanta Philosophy, Part I).—By the late Swami Prajnānanda Saraswati. Published by the Sankara Math, Barisal, Bengal. Pp. 392. Price, Rs. 4.

Very few books in a comprehensive way have been written on the history of the Vedanta Philosophy, the crest-jewel of the Indian religion and culture. Few people care for this subject. Those who want to acquaint themselves with the wisdom of the ancient sages of India are satisfied with the study of the Upanishads in the light of the commentaries. They thus think that they have known everything of the oldest philosophy of India. But the Śrutis do not constitute a philosophy in its proper

sense, though they contain all the ideas which have been subsequently systematised in the form of philosophy, the most ancient and noted treatise of its kind being the Vedanta-Sutra of Bhagavan Vyasa. But even that is not a history of Philosophy. A proper history of the Vedanta Philosophy must contain the names of the various thinkers who embellished it from time to time with their precious thoughts, their chronology, the names of the various commentators, their approximate dates, the relation of the philosophy itself to the other extant philosophies of the country, and lastly its place in the philosophical thought of the world. A stupendous task. It is all the more difficult in the case of Vedanta inasmuch as it is the most ancient system of thought in the world, and even the most erudite research and scholarship have failed to investigate into its early and later developments. We get a glimpse of the subject now-a-days from books written by some Western scholars. Thanks to their life-long labours in this field.

The book under review is one of the few attempts that have been made to write a comprehensive history of the Vedanta philosophy. The author was a Sannyasin and approached the subject with the characteristic sympathetic spirit. Hence the book has its own limitations which are also due in no small measure to the exceptional circumstances under which the book was written when the author had not access to the proper books that should be consulted. Besides, unfortunately he passed away shortly after the writing of the manuscript, and he could not therefore revise it in the light of some modern researches.

The first part contains some exhaustive chapters on the origin and growth of the Vedanta. Its very interesting feature is short sketches of the various Acharyas whose names are associated with the Vedantic system of thought. The chapters on Sankara are really very important and educative though we do not agree with a few conclusions, especially about his age. The book displays all along the vast amount of scholarship and penetrating intellect of the

author not only in respect of Indian philosophy but Western as well. A Sannyasin who expects no material return for any personal effort will get his just reward from the gratefulness of the students of Vedanta who will find his book an invaluable help in their studies and researches, and it is certainly a pioneer work that will embolden others to make adventures into the forlorn and perplexing realm of Vedanta. The get-up of the book is nice and the style elegant throughout. It may be added that the book has been thoroughly edited by Sjt. Rajendra Nath Ghosh who has been responsible for the publication of many Vedantic treatises in Bengal.

MANER KATHA (THE STORY OF MIND):—By Dr. Sarasi Lal Sarkar. Published by Gurudas Chatterji and Sons, 203/1/1 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pp. 95. Price not mentioned.

This is a book on psycho-analysis, perhaps one of the few written on the subject in Bengali. At the outset there is a small but learned introduction from the pen of Dr. Girindra Sekhar Bose, D. Sc., M.B., who gives therein an idea about psycho-analysis and its place in modern times. The subjects treated in the book are: Actions and Reactions of the Mind, Psycho-analysis, The Problem of Dreams, and The Reactions of the Mind and the Results of Actions. The author has brought to bear on the subject his personal experience as a physician and furnished ample illustrations to prove his thesis. It is a good sign of the times that English educated people like Dr. Sarkar are writing such books in the vernaculars. Psycho-analysis, it must be admitted, is a great achievement of the modern science, and it proposes to solve many problems of the pshycho-pathology of our every day life. We hope that the author will write similar works in Bengali for the benefit of those who do not know English.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

- (1) The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour, for the years 1923 and 1924.

- (2) The Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal (Hardwar), for 1924.
  - (3) The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras for 1925.
  - (4) The Report of the Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Hubigunj, Sylhet (Bengal), for 1925.
  - (5) The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 7 Haldar Lane, Calcutta, for 1925.
  - (6) The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares, for 1925.
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## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE STRONG BODY.

Oh for a strong body!—That is the cry that goes from our heart. We are afraid our countrymen will feel prone to smile at our effusion. "A strong body is all right," they will say, "but we want the strength of the soul first and so on and so forth." Yet if they would but think a little, they will find that we—the Hindus at least—have not bestowed the due amount of attention to the importance of having a strong physique. We have become too spiritual and superfine. For everything we suggest a subtle and supernormal remedy. Our mind has a tendency to soar too high into philosophy and become unreal. This tendency is at the root of much of our present sufferings. Who does not feel that the Hindu community would have escaped much insult had it only been more physically fit? It is helpless to defend the honour of its homes, mothers and temples. Is it not foolish to speculate philosophically on such things? A strong body, strong enough to defend the honour of its home and religion, is all that is needed. And that, alas is wanting! What we have is a blind appeal to Fate and Providence, as if the powers have no other business than working miracles for cowards!

We do not blame our people for this tendency. It is a very good thing, only it is being wrongly applied. Now it has become unsubstantial, mere formal. The reliance on the Supra-physical, this transcendental outlook, is all right ; but it must be preceded by the fulfilment of certain conditions. The Books are tireless in saying that a fearless, strong and moral man alone can live on those high principles. Others must follow lower ideals. Those who yet have a strong body-consciousness, cannot perceive the spirit as real and tangible. To them this world with its good and evil is the most real. They therefore cannot ignore its existence, its facts and laws, with impunity. But that is exactly what we Hindus have been doing for the last several centuries, till by now our life in every sense has become unsubstantial and dream-like. We must look the world in the face. And for that we must have strong and healthy bodies, efficient minds and behind them always the alert consciousness of the noble ideals of our fathers. A strong body makes a healthy mind. As it is, what do we find? Our habits are mummified, our actions worthy of pygmies, our thoughts feeble and tastes unworthy of true manhood. Almost all the vernacular literatures are filled with the nauseant smell of putrid sentimentalism. Short stories, amorous tales, lyrics and abnormal fiction,—all indicate the unhealthy mentality of their writers and patrons. This sentimentalism is the sign and proof of the weak mind, of narrow vision and hollow life. Much of these products, we may rest assured, will be thrown into the scrap heap, when we have built up strong nerves and muscles for us.

It was not for nothing that Swami Vivekananda said in course of one of his Madras addresses: "You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm upon your feet." Yes, the physically weak are unable even to conceive the high ideals of our religion, much less practise them. That



tremendous enthusiasm and fearless perseverance can come only from a healthy mind in a strong body. Our cry therefore is first and mainly for a strong physique. For we know that three-fourths of our misery are traceable to physical weakness, and that the moment we shall acquire "muscles of iron and nerves of steel," the crown of divine glory shall descend on our head. When strength will come, it shall be devoted not to the exploitation of the weak, which is such an ugly feature of modern civilisation, but to the service of man-kind. For, have we not, through millenniums of training and traditions, been taught to aspire ever after the Highest and scorn the meannesses of material civilisation?

#### THE GERMAN YOUTH MOVEMENT.

By the inscrutable law of Providence, much good sometimes follows from what is apparently evil. The last world war is an instance to the point. For, in spite of all its ugly consequences, it has furnished the Western nations with many instructive lessons which they would not otherwise have learnt. For example, there are many in the West now who feel the charm of the ideal of world federation, and are trying to conceive humanity as a united whole. Various attempts, besides, are being made to obliterate unwholesome class distinctions in society and find the spiritual values of life. The German Youth Movement is one of such attempts. The *June Welfare* publishes the translation of an article on the subject contributed to a Swiss monthly by a young German, in course of which he says: "The man of education and culture when he first entered active service (during the last war) discovered with a sort of shock that the man of common people who marched shoulder to shoulder with him and shared the trenches with him was his comrade and friend—a man." Thus opened a new vista before his eyes, and he found to his great astonishment that the self-centred egotism which had so long bound him down to narrow conceptions, had vanished, and a greater and nobler world had taken possession of

his mind. His angle of vision was changed, and by and by he became a staunch advocate of universal love,—“love for his own fellowmen, for the universe, for God.”

This magic touch of common suffering and experience acquired from the battle-fields is the real source of this new movement in Germany. The youths have now raised their voice against the so-called education of the pre-war times, and are seeking to find full scope for the activity of their heart, head and hands in a more intense sense than before through the experiences of actual life. “In order to get into closer contact with life, the young men of Germany seek the most elementary experiences. They go out into the country to learn from actual association with peasants and labourers the attitudes and fundamental notions that the city man, especially the educated city man, has never learned. They wish.....to learn what it is to be hungry and thirsty, to suffer from heat and cold—in a word, to know intimately as a part of their own experience all the phases of the dream of existence. It is only thus, they say, that one can become a complete man. There is something of the simplicity and the grandeur of the first Franciscan fathers in this conception—the same renunciation of worldly wealth, the same stress upon the value of immaterial treasures, the same humble garb, the same passion to get closer to God and His creation.” “So a great social-spiritual awakening has come in Germany, after a period when ‘God was dead.’ This impulse to transcend the narrow cell of the individual to surrender one’s self to supra-individual forces, is essentially religious. Its metaphysical self-sacrifice to society has no connection with political and economic socialism.”

Can we not here in India emulate with profit the example of these young Germans? Of course, with us the motive must be different. But there is undeniably a great need of our youths going out into the villages and becoming one with them in their joys and sorrows. The barriers between the educated town-breds and the illiterate villagers must be broken down. Recently a

writer suggested in an article appearing in *The Young Men of India* that intimate experience of the village life and service to it should be a necessary part of the qualifications for the university diploma. This is union through indirect pressure. If, however, our young men would refuse to go out of their own will, the writer's suggestion is certainly worth consideration and taking up.

#### THE BUDDHA FIND MAY LINK CHINA WITH THE MEXICANS.

We have received an interesting letter from a New York correspondent of ours. He quotes a cablegram from an American Newspaper which says: "A stone figure of Buddha has been unearthed in Fizapan, State of Jalisco, to which archeologists attach great importance. The figure is exactly like those found in China and with other discoveries is expected to prove a connection between the early inhabitants of Mexico and the Chinese. The image has been presented to the National Museum where experts are making a careful study of it. Scientists differ radically over the possible Oriental origin of the Indians. Other objects found with the figure indicate a pre-Aztes origin."

This cablegram promises many things. The correspondent remarks: "Though the above press despatch is very brief, it will be as revolutionary as if it was all true. Hitherto the reach of India's culture and its influence stopped with the Western shore of the Pacific. Now it has crossed that body of water. What a triumph for our ancestors! That product of Indian spirituality—the Buddha—reached America long before Columbus. In other words, the force of the Soul is stronger and longer than the greed of conquest."

He concludes: "It is fitting that since Buddha's image was brought here this continent was discovered in the name of his motherland India. When Vivekananda came to the West he came to the land in whose womb the Tathagata's image has been sleeping. Let us hope that the above cablegram will be followed by fuller reports of weight and clarity."

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य ब्रह्मनिबीषत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI.

AUGUST, 1926.

No. 8.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

24th January, 1921.

One of the Swami's toe-nails had come off of itself. Referring to this, the Swami said, "Thus is the body left behind, and the soul flies off, though, of course, not unperceived ;—the mind, the ego feels its departure. During my illness at Puri, I did on one occasion actually feel a struggle going between the soul and another, and my breath became automatically controlled. But at last the soul was victorious. I said afterwards that I was not going to die that time. I had then no consciousness of the external, so fully absorbed was I in the struggle. After that I saw a vision of Swamiji saying to me, 'What is this? Get up! This lying down won't do.' From this also I knew that I would not die."

The Swami quoted from the Gita, "The great elements, egoism, intellect, and also the unmanifested, the ten senses, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the body,

intelligence, fortitude ;—these briefly described constitute the Kshetra—the Field, and its modifications'." And he added, "The Kshetrajna, that is, the Jiva, alone is real, and its reality makes the Kshetra, the body, mind etc. appear as real. In his last birth, man becomes conscious of the Truth, knows God and succumbs no more to egoistic delusions.

"Attachment and aversion are at the root of all evil. Hence the injunction to relinquish them. For, free of them, one can do with impunity whatever one likes.

"One attains Knowledge through the grace of the great sages.—'Through the grace of the great ones or of the Lord,' says the scripture. Then one feels a strong yearning for emancipation from the world, and the Cosmic Will makes circumstances favourable to him. This is beautifully illustrated by Sri Ramakrishna's story of a man seeking for snake poison deposited in a human skull under specified conditions.

"The Jiva is bound. Like a tethered cow he is free to a certain extent only, not fully. But he is emancipated if he utilises that limited freedom in a full measure. He does not do it, but rather abuses it in various ways.

"Each man has his own world and sees the same Substance in a different way. Realising the Self in all things, one attains to Peace Eternal."

*26th January, 1921.*

The Swami began by remarking on D— who was showing signs of insanity. He said, "To keep company with a madman, one must be mad oneself. I know if I can devote my full energy to him, I can cure him. But my health is so bad that if I do it, this body will go in two days. I find I have not been my usual calm self these last two days. I get easily excited."

The Swami strongly reprov'd Dh—for being slack in Sadhana. "He is daily going down into Tamas," said he, "augmenting laziness in the name of Sadhana. They think that inaction in itself is the ideal. If it be so, why, then the wall also should be considered to have realised

Samadhi. Should one not transcend all dualities? To maintain one's mental balance under all circumstances, to remain absolutely unmoved,—that indeed is the goal!

“‘Worship of Narayana’—how exquisite! This is the beautiful characteristic of the present age.

“Meditation and work both are excellent, if *properly* done. They are equally good. While staying at Darjeeling, Swamiji said to me, ‘I shall inaugurate a new system of Brahmacharya. There shall be no more of begging and roving about.’ I replied, ‘But begging and wandering about is not all bad.’ Swamiji agreed with me. ‘Yes, you are right,’ he said, ‘there must be some kind of Tapasya.’

“At the time when P— joined the Order, the idea prevailed in the B—Math that Swamiji has preached differently from Sri Ramakrishna, and he imbibed it deeply. The idea is considerably discredited now. But it is hard to change one's nature. A leopard will not change his spots.

“Practice of medicine is bad if you seek remuneration. Selflessly done, it leads to salvation. They say that work binds. Well, if it binds, it also unbinds. What kind of meditation is this, half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening? Must not there be an uninterrupted flow throughout the day? Closing eyes for a few minutes and spending the remaining day in gossip! One must try long and hard, only then can one have realisation.

“As you sow, so you reap. If you want anything, start seeking it at once. You may not do the best, but do as best as you can. Now or never!”

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## THE RIDDLE OF RIDDLES.

### II

The birth of species and their evolution are an interesting study. Every organism, packed with life, has an inherent tendency to live. Impelled by this tendency it struggles to make the best of its situation, suiting itself to the favourable and unfavourable forces of air, water, heat, light etc. But nature selects only those organisms which are the fittest, and the rest perish. Nature has therefore been compared to a gladiatorial show where the strongest and the fittest get the palm of victory, and the weak and the unfit are eliminated. It was Darwin who first worked out fully the doctrine of evolution by *natural selection* in his epoch-making work, *The Origin of Species*, which revolutionised science and philosophy in the West. Huxley, a follower of Darwin, nicely illustrates the method of nature thus: "You want to kill a hare in a field of clover. Now you may proceed in either of two ways and accomplish your object. You may have any number of guns and fire them all at random, and perchance you may kill the hare. Or you may be armed with a single gun and kill the animal aiming and firing straight at it." The latter is, no doubt, the economical method. But the former, though extravagant, for it means infinite trials and failures with a few successes only, is the way of nature. There are numerous evidences, direct and indirect, of the selective principle of nature, and the works on biology are full of them. Natural selection has different modes, *lethal* and *reproductive* being chief among them. The former works by "the discriminate elimination of the relatively less fit," and the latter through "the increased and more effective reproductivity incident on the success of the more fit." Besides, there is *sexual*, *germinal* and *family* selection. Thus the factors involved are the *will to live* manifesting itself as the *struggle for existence*, and the *selection of nature* resulting in the *survival of the fittest*.

This is not all. *Heredity* and *environment* also play

a great part in the origin and evolution of species. The variations going on within the cells and the modifications acquired by the influence of environment are both transmitted to the new cells derived from them, and these characters being slowly accumulated from generation to generation ultimately bring into existence new species. For examples we may cite the cases of giraffes and swift-footed deer. Both of them perhaps primarily belonged to one family but afterwards became divided, one having long necks, the other swift-footedness. The influence of environment and the transference of acquired modifications are factors first suggested by Lamarck and adopted by Herbert Spencer, and finally also recognised by Darwin himself. But they have been discounted, specially the latter, by biologists like Weismann and others. They hold that changes of structure earned by individual organisms, however beneficial, cannot be transferred to new organisms, and so the original germ-cell remains intact and is transmitted as it is by duplication. There has been a considerable progress in the idea of evolution and the study of variations since Darwin's time. The *mutation theory* and *Mendelism*, among others, deserve special mention.

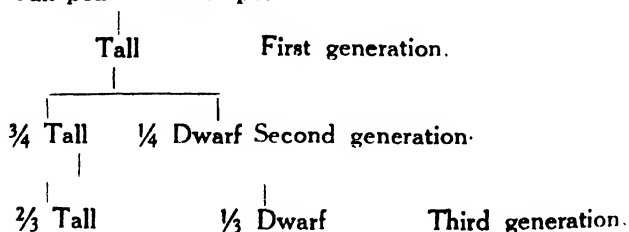
In 1900 Hugo de Vries of Amsterdam wrote under the title of *The Mutation Theory* an account of his experiments and observations on the origin of species in the vegetable kingdom. The salient point of his thesis is that nature does not always creep but sometimes jumps. Unlike Darwin he says that "species arise from one another by discontinuous leaps and bounds as opposed to a continuous process. Darwin relied on the action of selection on minute individual variations or fluctuations; De Vries believes that these have nothing to do with the origin of species which appear *all at once* by mutations." In support of his theory he cited many evidences obtained first-hand. He once came across a stock of evening primrose whose progeny exhibited sudden and repeated leaps followed by remarkable constancy of attributes. Mutations are thus variations by



which new and distinct types arise. They are the sports of nature. Although they occur fairly often, they are not generally noticed until the new form has already made its appearance. De Vries is of opinion that all the simple characters and attributes of plants and animals have their origin in this way, and he proves that there are many characteristics which remain integral and refuse to blend. At this stage of our knowledge we cannot decide as to the relative importance of fluctuations and mutations. We must wait patiently and see.

Johann Mendel, an Austro-Silesian abbot, is the author of a very important discovery in biology known to the general public as Mendelism. He experimented for many years on crossing different varieties of garden peas and wrote a thesis that remained practically unknown till 1900. Prof. R. C. Punnett, himself a productive investigator, states the characteristic Mendelian result thus: "Wherever there occurs a pair of differentiating characters of which one is dominant to the other, three possibilities exist. There are recessives which always breed true to the recessive character; there are dominants which breed true to the dominant character and are therefore pure; and thirdly, there are dominants which may be called impure, and which on self-fertilization (or inbreeding, where the sexes are separate) give both dominant and recessive forms in the fixed proportion of three of the former to one of the latter." The following geneological table will bring home to us the central points of Mendel's conclusion:

Tall pea  $\times$  Dwarf pea.



The law of heredity as depicted here is true not only with regard to domestic plants and animals but also with regard to wild ones. That there are exceptions in nature, which cannot, strictly speaking, be proved by the Mendelian theory, is undeniable. But we must say that Mendelism is a distinct advance in the line of biological experiments and throws a flood of light upon many natural phenomena.

We have considered briefly the different theories of cosmological and biological evolution. Now let us notice here the famous *evidences* furnished by evolutionists to support their thesis. First, there is the *historical* evidence. Evolutionists say that fishes emerge before amphibians, and these before reptiles, and so on. But what is the proof? How do we know for certain that it is so and not otherwise? Modern archæology has unearthed many remains of extinct plants and animals that bear an eloquent testimony to the fact. The famous fossils of the horse species which Marsh discovered from American tertiary beds is an instance in point. They indicate a regular series and are one of the most impressive of pedigrees that has yet been disclosed. Besides, there are the wonderfully complete fossil series, e.g., among cuttle fishes, elephants and crocodiles, in which one can almost read evolution in process. But we must also confess that there are other cases in regard to which we have not as yet obtained any definite knowledge. Next, there is the *embryological* evidence. Embryology an interesting science, tells us that an individual organism in the process of growth in the womb often repeats the presumed stages of the evolution of the race. "The Mammal's visceral clefts are tell-tale evidences of remote aquatic ancestors, breathing by gills. Something is known in regard to the historical evolution of antlers in bygone ages; the red deer of today recapitulates at least the general outlines of the history." Thirdly, there is the *physiological* evidence. It is a fact that there are many plants and animals which are evolving before our very eyes. Those who

critically observe the behaviours of plants and animals from generation to generation must admit it. The physiological evidence is specially applicable to domesticated animals and cultivated plants which are very variable and quick in progress. Finally, there is what might be called the *anatomical* evidence, and it is very convincing. The fore-limbs of backboned animals, say, the paddle of a turtle, the wing of a bird, the flipper of a whale, the foreleg of a horse, and the arm of a man, have the same essential bones and muscles used variously for various purposes. Does it not indicate blood relationship? These are the main evidences in favour of the doctrine of evolution. When we take all these evidences into account we cannot easily question the validity of the doctrine and call it a mere speculation. The fact of evolution, as we have said before, is generally accepted, but the quarrel and difference of opinion is about its actual method.

We have shown that the mechanical explanation of nature and life is not satisfactory. It is logically fallacious and factually contradictory. Even if we can explain the inorganic world as the outcome of a blind chance, the organic world, extremely complex and showing intelligent adaptations of means to ends, of lower ends to higher ends, remains a mystery. Then again, if we take the inorganic and the organic worlds as separate like two parallel straight lines running indefinitely, how are we to account for the evident interaction and co-ordination that we find between them? The so-called stock theories of the occasional interference of a Supreme Being and of the pre-established harmony improvised to maintain the desired balance have long ago been exploded. It is clear, and we think every rational man will agree with us when we say that nature, in spite of the aberrations and sports we meet with here and there, is the manifestation and unfoldment of an idea. We must not create an unbridgeable gulf, separating the two worlds, for, the apparent difference and disparity that we notice between them is due to the degree

of manifestation. Recently it has been proved scientifically by Sir J. C. Bose, as it was done thousands of years ago by the Vedic seers synthetically, that there is one life and consciousness throughout nature. Evolutionists like Darwin, Lamarck and others, though they may be given the credit for explaining the evolution of the physical organism, the outer sheath of life, have not been able to solve the riddle of life. The body is nothing but a projection of the mind, and the body is evolving because the mind wills it so. Henry Bergson faintly echoes this idea in his newly propounded doctrine of the *creative evolution*. He calls life the *elan vital*, and this "life is like a current passing from germ to germ through the medium of a developed organism. \* \* \* The essential thing is the continuous progress indefinitely pursued, an invisible progress, on which each visible organism rides during the short interval of time given it to live." This life is an intelligent principle with an innate tendency to create new forms and has become, under different circumstances, inert matter, plants, animals and men.

The theories of evolution considered here are mainly what prevail in the West. Though the Western physicists, biologists, sociologists and metaphysicians have gone into details and furnished various convincing data to establish their hypotheses, they labour under many difficulties some of which we have pointed out. They have not been able, in one word, to explain the deeper issues of the problem of evolution. Those who have gone through the *Upanishads* and other philosophical literatures of the Hindus are aware that the Hindus conceived the idea of evolution about 5000 years before Christ and gave to the world some of the most convincing theories explaining the mystery of existence. Of course, they did not go into details, and we do not find in their system a systematic and elaborate treatment of the genesis of the world and of living creatures. But it must be admitted that in those pre-historic times when the modern European nations were not even heard of,

the Hindus gave in germs some of the fundamental principles of the idea of evolution that will serve as the connecting links in the present day theories.

In the *Upanishads* it is said: "From the undifferentiated Absolute Being gradually evolved vital force, mind and all the sense-powers, ether, heat and all that is gaseous, liquid and solid." This undifferentiated Absolute Reality is the causal energy called differently as Maya, Prakriti or Sakti, and it is associated with an intelligent Principle called Brahman, Purusha or Siva. At the dawn of creation or projection, the Ultimate Reality, who was one without a second, reflected and wanted to be many, and the result is this world evolved gradually from subtle to gross. The different stages of the evolution of the cosmos and living creatures, recorded in the Vedanta, the Sankhya and other philosophies though very interesting, need not be referred to here. We shall simply notice some of their final conclusions, which have special bearing on the problem of evolution in order to supplement what we have stated before. They are: (1) Something cannot come out of nothing (2) The effect is but the cause reproduced (3) Death or dissolution means the going back of the effect to its causal state. (4) Laws of nature are regular and uniform throughout. (5) That which is in the microcosm exists also in the macrocosm. (6) The cosmos is the outcome of the Primal Energy. (7) Every process of evolution is followed by a process of involution, and there is no evolution in a straight line. (8) The chain of evolution and involution is endless. Besides in order to explain the evolution of species the Indian thinkers have brought in the doctrines of reincarnation and Karma. They are, it may be said without any fear of contradiction, the most cogent doctrines, which go deep into the question and explain the life-principle encased in different subtle and gross bodies, weaving out the web of Karma from generation to generation in different transmigratory existences under different garbs. Space will not permit us to develop the Hindu ideas of evolu-

tion, reincarnation and Karma which we reserve for some future issue.

Before we conclude we shall quote here the closing words of Darwin in his *The Descent of Man*. He says: "We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man, with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men, but to the humblest creature, with his God-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin." Here an undeserved fling has been cast at man, for man according to Darwin must trace his descent to brute animal. But we who believe in the solidarity of the human personality say that man is God, and the brute animal-forms through which he passes in order to work out his Karma are also Divine, for everything that we see is permeated by Divinity.

## INDIA'S MALADY AND ITS REMEDY.

BY SURENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY, M.A.

Swami Vivekananda's one prop was God. He saw that India had almost everything that was needed to constitute a civilised nation, viz., intellect, culture, manners etc., but she forgot her faith in the Lord—she forgot the most important lesson taught by the great Master, the charioteer of Arjuna, before setting in motion the tidal wave of reconstructive destruction in the field of Kurukshetra. "It is certainly the self which is the friend of the self. It is again the self which is the enemy of the self. Save yourself by the self. Depress not the self."

Craven fear pervaded India, a spirit of dependence on anything except the self,—a magic, superstition and supernaturalism obsessed her. Time-serving paltroons

dictated to her counsels of fear. Rapacious jealousy—the inevitable offshoot of cowardice and weakness—cankered into her vitals. The weevil of a mean self-love which is begotten in darkness when the search-light of the true self is no more to detect the growth of this vermin, had eaten away her substance, and real India had gone, and a hideous mockery of her real self remained to be a butt of ridicule to the foreigners. On the breath of the foreigners depended her good name. A word of praise from them was hailed with avidity by the Indian patriots. The present offered to them a dismal, dreary and cheerless prospect. Their minds harked back to the past only for examples of greatness. Von Hegel, the celebrated German philosopher, looked down upon India with an unmixed contempt. The beauty of her civilisation may be compared with the pallid beauty of a woman just delivered of a child—a pale, sickly and anæmic beauty without the vigour and ruddy complexion of a normal and healthy life. He thought that in the hierarchy of civilisations India ranked lowest but one, viz., China. Persia, Arabia, Greece, Rome and Germany all were, in his estimation, superior to India. The contributions of India to the world civilisation were insignificant. The reason for holding such a low opinion of India must be sought in the fact that it was, as far as I can recollect, a pet theory of this philosopher outlined in his *Philosophy of History* that a conquering nation is invariably superior to the vanquished. It is difficult to counteract the truth of this theory by marshalling spurious arguments unsupported by practical demonstration. The opinion of an acute philosopher like Hegel is a pretty sure index of the mental attitude of an average foreigner. I have heard of an inhabitant of Persia taking deliberate care to make himself understood that he is not an Indian Parsee. To be an Indian is a stigma. But while you will not perhaps meet with a single barbarian Kabuli dressed as a civilised European, you will meet, in your daily round of duties, scores of Indians, who make miserable attempts to pass themselves off as Europeans, unconscious of the degrada-

tion in which they sink themselves and make others, by their contagious examples, follow the same path of darkness and shame.

The time has now come when each Indian should cast off the wisdom of the ostrich and know where he stands. He should know that it is not they, who adapt themselves to environments and basely copy the models of the West in their speech, manners and thought and accumulate wealth by foul methods, that are the real saviours of India ; but that it is the true Sannyasins, whether in the world or outside it, who have fearlessly consecrated their lives to keeping aflame the torch of India's real culture, and who are vouchsafed, in the solitude of profound meditation where the inward eye opens and sees things in a true perspective, a limpid vision of the ills from which the body corporate of India is suffering as well of the methods for doctoring the ills. From time immemorial, it is not the selfless sages of India, but the lily-livered and chicken-hearted braggarts, who, apprehensive of the loss of shadowy prestige and vested interests of their own, encrusted the life of real India shells after shells of life-killing forms and customs and pressed out of her body the juice of vitality and originality. From time immemorial the hoary guardians of the welfare of India have been teaching the all-important lesson of the absolute necessity of *fearlessness* as the essential pre-requisite of a religious life. But we have heeded them not. Herein lies the basic explanation of the downfall of India. Many mountebanks and empirics have risen in India and are still rising, who pose as reformers and, full of self-conceit at the possession of an ephemeral wisdom, culled from the thoughts of the hour, pass upon the unthinking multitude, any reason as the cause of the downfall of India, which he finds ready at hand and easily acceptable to them.

Early marriage, caste restrictions, Brahminism, idol worship, foreign domination, in short everything that is a symptom of the disease and not the disease itself, has been laid hold of in turn and forced to yield an explana-



tion of the degradation of India ; and each quack, only too anxious to find a market for his potent herbs, is ready on the field with basketfuls of valuable drugs for removing the distemper of India. Some of the "modern," "enlightened" and "advanced" teachers would go beyond the attempts of the mere tinkers and suggest the most heroic measures for making India whole. Lop off the limbs which are affected. Abolish marriage, abolish caste, abolish Brahminism, break the idols, they would cry and try to. In short demolish India, and then all on a sudden a new India will rise like Urvashi from the bottomless sea of destruction. These people, sincere though they may be, forget that when gangrene sets in the body of a diabetic patient, the operations and incisions on the body serve no useful purpose beyond merely exposing the extent of the hideous havoc which the fell disease has worked on the body. The maladroit attempts of these quack operators only hasten the end of the patient unless they are attended with intelligent attempts to restore vitality to the body. When the disease has made the body its home it must find out an outlet, and no artificial attempts to smother it will succeed. Infuse vitality, infuse the positive resisting power, and then the disease will die a natural death. Now that the body politic of India is suffering from loss of resisting power and the effects of physical and moral prostration, early marriage, if merely abolished, will reappear in the form of other moral evils, caste restrictions in the form of rancorous and heart-killing jealousy, Brahminism in the shape of a grovelling libertinism, flunkeyish snobbishness and turn-coat manners.

Let us therefore come back to ourselves, collect our thoughts, concentrate our dissipated energies and convert them into motive forces of an enduring character.

Let us remember that "in the end," as says Ruskin. the God of heaven and earth loves active, modest and kind people, and hates idle, proud, greedy, and cruel ones," and let us cease to spurn and bluster, and calmly and meekly set ourselves athinking how the great-

est seers and prophets of India have thought, lived and died. Unless we are obsessed with an unconquerable spirit of cussedness and egotism the conclusion will irresistibly force itself upon us that they were unanimous in declaring that *fearlessness* forms the foundation of the edifice of a religious life. We shall find that this truth which was seized upon by the Indian savants will furnish a wonderful explanation to the brain-racking riddle which must have been tormenting the minds of many a sincere and pious thinker. How is it that the God of Heaven allowed Hindustan who excels perhaps the whole world in the virtues of meekness, innocence and charity—Hindustan who of all countries in the world made vegetable-eating into a social institution—Hindustan who perhaps of all countries in the world has succeeded in materialising the ideal of chastity of women into an actual practice and has suffered herself to be laughed at and ridiculed and reviled by the lustful tribes for her grim tenacity in holding on to the feeling of extreme reverence for her mothers, sisters and wives, which would not suffer so much as a touch of impurity to sully the purity of the womanhood by permitting them to harbour even in thought a feeling of so-called love for any person except the one to whom they are wedded for once—Hindustan where the highest idealities have passed into actualities—how is it that God allowed this Hindustan, this land of Maharshis and Satis, to be defiled and desecrated by civilised and uncivilised barbarians and allowed her children to be butchered in thousands like lambs by the ruthless conquerors without appearing to feel the least perturbed therefore?

There is one and only one answer possible to this. Because we were cowards, because our faith in God was lip-deep, and we forgot the real spirit of religion. God saw that instead of worshipping Him, we worshipped the Simularum, the dark-visaged Fear, and we preferred dishonour to death. He saw that we loved life more than we loved the Life of life, the eternal Brahman, abiding in the inward tabernacle of our soul, that to save our skin

we were prepared to give up even our wives and properties. It was as a punishment for such a contemptible love of life and its inevitable offspring, debasing fear, that the Author of the universe whose ways are hidden from the public ken appears to have sent Timurlaines, Nadirshahs, plagues and famines to India, to bring home to her people what little value He attaches to the lives of men who have not sensation enough in them to feel the necessity at times of gladly courting death for gaining a truer and better life, who are not, to quote Ruskin, "true in affection to the death, as the sea-monsters are and the rock-eagles." He suffered them to be shorn off like sheaves of corn and permitted a general holocaust of them at times. God can commit no wrong. We blame God when the "faults in ourselves lie." Out of His infinite mercy for the children of India, however, He has not allowed India and her culture to be swept off the face of the earth like the Maoris and Red Indians, because, it seems, that India once reached the acme of moral and spiritual perfection, and because, as profoundly observed by the late Swami Prajnananda somewhere perhaps in his *Bharater Sadhana*, that a truth once discovered cannot die, but will remain hidden somewhere in the body of the nation. This explains the possibility of the cataclystic religious upheavals inaugurated by a Nanak. Chaitanya and Ramakrishna even in these degenerated times. These plainly indicate that the Hindu cannot die. In spite of the doleful cries of lugubrious pessimists who have no other measure of life excepting the meter furnished by physiology, we must believe that the Hindu and his culture are not intended by God for extinction. But even God's mercy has its limits. If one deliberately blindfolds oneself and inspite of warnings proceeds to the edge of a bottomless abyss, there is no power on earth which can save him from destruction.

The time has now come when each Indian should think within himself, take stock of actual facts and try to read a telcological import into the dire scourges with which God has lashed India from time to time. These

rude shocks are the signals of warning, calls of the spirit of India to her children to arise and awake and put their houses in order unless they are prepared to be deleted from the face of the earth.

Laws we have had enough and more than enough, maxims we have had galore, criticisms, destructive and constructive, we have had a rich harvest of, but followers we have few and far between. As Paramahansa Deva used to say : "Teachers can be had by tens of thousands, but disciples very few." It means that talkers there are many but doers extremely rare. Victor Hugo observed that the character of a true leader was that "he did what he preached." It was Paramahansa Deva who preached and practised to perfection the gospel of "making the mind and mouth one," and Swami J—, one of the truest knights of the Order of Ramakrishna, a veritable emblem of broad-minded catholicity of spirit and unostentatious self-renunciation, observes in a letter written to the writer : "The world is a mystery there is no doubt. It will never be solved. All theories are inconsistent. It must be so. A theory is nothing. It is only sincerity of purpose that tells. X—is not so much respected for his theories as for his most sincere life."

We have, it is hoped, diagnosed the disease from which India has been suffering, and also suggested its cure. But how to procure it is a problem, the treatment of which will require a lengthy disquisition. But it is clear that mere legislation can avail very little in this direction. Swami Vivekananda cried himself hoarse over the necessity of giving a man-making education to the people of India. His exhortations seem to be bearing fruits now. India seems to be gradually waking from the stupor of age-long self-hypnotism and listening to the clarion call of the real prophet of new India. But we are yet far from the goal, we are yet under the spell of "Everlasting No," we have still got the stoop of decrepitude and cannot look straight and walk straight. We loudly advertise to the public whatever little good we are capable of doing—a sure synptom of spiritual bank-

ruptcy. We are still suffering from the after-effects of a moral paralysis. But is there no means of getting rid of this soul-throttling incubus, this morbidity of the national mind, this horrible distrust of one's power?

A Rishi of the hoary antiquity, calm and self-possessed, warbled forth in the Upanishads to the blessed children of India: "That great birthless Spirit is free from decrepitude, deathless, immortal and fearless and is Brahman Himself. Brahman is well-known as *Fearlessness*. Whoever knoweth the Spirit thus becometh Brahman who is *Fearlessness*."

To get back this lost treasure, this Brahman of India who was held by the Rishi Yajnavalkya to be synonymous with *Fearlessness*, we shall have to undergo a spiritual fire-baptism. Sri Ramakrishna came to us not for nothing. Swami Vivekananda was sent to us not for nothing. Signs are visible on all sides that the Indian Leviathan is shaking its limbs. We are a race of hero-worshippers by instinct, by tradition and culture. The ochre cloth has almost always lured India with a subtle fascination. It is still exercising a tremendous influence on the fate of India. Let us, in a spirit of true comradeship, rally round the banner of Sri Ramakrishna, the lord and master of hundreds of Sannyasins who have consecrated their lives to rejuvenating the ancient culture of India, and in the face of the heaviest odds, malevolent criticisms, and what is even worse, an impressive callousness, are bravely toiling for the spiritual liberation of India. Let us lay our all at the feet of him, the truest and bravest of kings, and form ourselves into a death-defying knighthood. *Wah Gurukî Fateh!*

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## NALANDA.

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA.

A few days before the last Christmas, myself and a brother monk one morning left Patna to see the famous excavations of Nalanda, the great University of the Buddhistic culture and aptly described as an epitome of the "age of artistic cultivation and skill, of a gorgeous and luxurious style of architecture, of deep philosophical knowledge, of profound and learned discussions and rapid progress in the path of civilisation." The journey was a pleasant one. From Buktarpore we travelled by the Behar Light Railway to Rajgir mentioned in the Mahabharata as the capital of Jarasandha, which figured prominently in the Buddhistic period as the capital of King Ajatasatru and as the place where the first Buddhist Council was held. Surrounded on all sides by five lofty peaks, the once famous city is now a debris overgrown with bushes and prickly shrubs. Even now the visitors are shown the wrestling ground of Jarasandha and a mysterious hall hidden in a solid rock which is reputed to contain fabulous wealth, and which has hitherto baffled all attempts to break through its stone wall. Rajgir is famous for its Jaina temples as well as a few warm springs in which we had a very pleasant bath even in the early morning of cold December.

We reached Nalanda station after sunset and stopped for the night at the Jain Dharmasala, about two miles from the station, which affords all comforts to the travellers. Early next morning after a hurried breakfast we come to the spot of excavations, first discovered by Cunningham and now indicated by melancholy tanks and a lofty line of mounds extending north and south over an area 2,600 feet by 400 feet. The University now identified with the village Bargaon has been mentioned in the Ceylonese Pali books as situated about a *yojana* (x miles) from Rajgir, and according to

Hiuen Tsang, the noted Chinese traveller, it was about 7 *yojanas* from the Peepul tree of Bodh Gaya. Both these accounts as well as those of Fahien point to the present village Bargaon as the site of Nalanda, and this enabled Cunningham to locate the famous Buddhist University, for which he has rightly earned the gratitude of all lovers of Indian history. The excavations under the supervision of the Archæological Department which began about a decade ago, are still going on revealing every day the glories of the Buddhistic civilisation.

It was an extremely foggy day, and the sun did not appear for about two hours in the morning. We came to the spot but could see very little ahead of us in that misty twilight. About three hundred coolies were working, and a Bengali gentleman, very kind and courteous was looking after the excavations. The first thing that attracted our notice was an extensive court, now identified as the monastery of Baladitya, which contains in its centre a magnificent building, only two stories of which are all that have escaped the ravages of time. Each story consists of thirty-two-seated rooms, each twelve cubits in length and eight in breadth. The massive structure is built of bricks much bigger than modern ones. The University buildings were constructed with bricks of superior quality and admirable structure, and Dr. Spooner remarked that as brick-work the construction was admirable and far superior to any modern work he had seen in modern years. As we stood on a mound, suddenly the sun arose, and we saw around us a marvellous and awe-inspiring scene. Even in the midst of those ruins stood before our vision the Royal University of Nalanda with "the richly adorned towers and fairy-like turrets like pointed hill-tops congregated together." One can even now easily imagine why the Chinese traveller stood agape with wonder when he saw the observatories lost in the vapours of the morning and the upper-rooms towering above the clouds. He, indeed, saw from the windows, as he described, the winds and clouds producing new forms.

Of course, one can get now a mere glimpse of the magnificent buildings so passionately described by Hiuen Tsang in his Indian travels. The deep, translucent ponds which bore on their surface the blue-lotus intermingled with Kanaka flowers of deep-red colour are now only gloomy marshes. The "Amra Groves" have disappeared for good. Looking around we only found a mental picture of the courts and priests' chambers, "their dragon projections and coloured eaves, the pearl-red pillars, carved and ornamented, the richly adorned balustrades and the roofs covered with tiles that reflected light in a thousand shades." Originally the buildings of Nalanda stood four-square like a city precinct. The gates had over-lapping eaves covered with tiles. The whole compound contained innumerable Chaityas, two of which we had the good fortune to see. They reveal exquisite workmanship. The Chaityas were built on various sacred vestiges and adorned with every kind of precious substance. One Chaitya commemorated the place where a Brahmin with the bird in his hand put questions to Lord Buddha. A raised space marked the place where Buddha walked. There were lotus flowers carved out of the stone, a foot high, fourteen or fifteen in number, to denote his footsteps. All these things were extant at the time of the Chinese traveller.

The whole establishment was enclosed within a stone wall whose trace has not yet been found out. A gate-keeper, a monk of vast learning, used to test all the new-comers who sought admission into the University, and it is said that out of ten prospective students not less than seven or eight failed in this entrance examination. The two or three who succeeded were generally humiliated in the hall by the assembly. This denotes the high standard of culture maintained in the University.

Only a little of the original University, as the officer-in-charge told us, has been excavated. For instance, they have not yet been able to identify the central temple so brilliantly described by the ancient travellers. Nor could we find a trace of the magnificent libraries.



One house, complete with roof, has been excavated, a rare thing indeed of the old age. We were most amused to find rice grains now black and charred, which were used in the monasteries about ten centuries ago. Again the discovery of the two wells used in those bygone times but still containing sweet and pure water is no less startling. The excavation department has been doing admirable work in one direction. They have made bricks of the same size as originally used in the construction of the monasteries. As in the process of excavation, the original structures are being destroyed, the repair work is immediately done with new bricks and therefore in many cases we still get, in full, the idea of the original structures.

No description of an excavation is complete without a mention of its attached museum. In this case also all the ancient relics that are being discovered every day are carefully preserved in a small museum, where we saw innumerable statues and statuettes of stone, bronze and other metals, parts of wood works, earthen pots and utensils, seals of various kinds, inscriptions, bricks with coloured enamels and fine engravings on stone, and thousand other things which testify to the high level of excellence and fine æsthetic perfection which India reached fifteen centuries ago. The University Seal with which was stamped the diplomas of the successful candidates bear the words :—

श्रीनलान्दा महाविहारीश्वर्य भिक्षु संघस्य ।

There are three remarkable statues outside the University compound. One is of Vajrasana Buddha in his "earth-touching posture." The posture alludes to the story that when the Lord attained his final illumination under the Bodhi Tree, Mara asked for a witness to testify to the veracity of his knowledge. Buddha touched the ground and said that mother earth was his witness. The statue is a huge one—as can be known from the following measurements. The height at the back is a little over 5 ft. 10 in. The breadth is 3 ft. 6 in. Dimension of the

neck is 3 ft. 2 in., the chest is 5 ft. 9 in. The second figure is on the southern edge of the mound at Jagadishpur. It is a statue of the ascetic Buddha seated under the Bodhi Tree of Buddha Gaya and surrounded by horrible demons and alluring females. On each side are engraved other scenes taken from the life-incidents and Nirvana of the Tathagata. The slab is 15 ft. high and 9½ ft. broad. The third figure has been described by Cunningham as that of Vajra-Barahi. All these figures were being worshipped by the villagers as Hindu deities.

Some information regarding the origin and growth of the great University, its fall and decline, may be interesting to our readers.

There is no clear mention of Nalanda in the accounts of Fahien who visited India in about 400 A.D. He came to Rajgir and mentions a village called Nala. So it may be said that the University did not exist in his time—though some historians opine that Nala afterwards developed into Nalanda. The earliest mention of the place we get in Taranath (450 A.D.), the Thibetan historian, according to whom Asoka built the place. The Buddhist tradition says that Sariputra, the famous disciple of Buddha, was born here, and 8,000 Arhats attained Nirvana in this place. Nalanda has been immortalised by the glowing accounts of Hiuen Tsang who stayed and studied here for ten years. The spot is intimately associated with some life-incidents of Buddha. As regards its name, the tradition says that Tathagata, in his former days practised here the life of a Bodhisattva and became the king of a great country. He selected the place as his capital. Even then he was sorely affected at the sight of human misery and affliction. He refused none that came to him for relief. He gave away all he had for their good. In remembrance of this virtue he was called "charity without intermission"—*Na-alam-da*. The Sangharama was so called to perpetuate his name. According to another tradition there was a tank in the middle of the Amra-grove situated to the south of the monastery. A Naga (snake) called Nalanda used to live

there, from which the monastery derived its name. It is further stated that while the foundation of the monastery was being laid, the diggers accidentally struck the snake, and it bled profusely. One of the monks present there remarked: "It is a very good omen. The fame of this monastery will spread far and wide."

Buddha during his itinerary period came here. A very rich man called Lepa used to live there at that time. It is mentioned that Buddha stayed there for three months in a rest-house named Amra-Batika. The place, according to Hiuen Tsang, was originally a garden of the Lord (Sresthin) Amra or Amra. Five hundred merchants bought it for ten lacs of gold pieces and presented it to Buddha. Here he was met by Sariputra and solved his difficulties. Here again Buddha was asked by a young householder to perform miracles which the Lord refused. From Nalanda, he moved to Pataliputra which was then much inferior to Nalanda. Ananda preferred Nalanda to Pataliputra as a better place for Buddha's Nirvana. According to Jaina Kalapasutra, Mahavira also come to Nalanda.

The great Chinese traveller writes that not long after the Parinirvana of Buddha, a former king of the country, called Sakraditya, laid the foundation of a monastery at Nalanda in order to perpetuate the sacred memory of the Lord. The original Sangharama was embellished by the addition of four more monasteries by his four successors, named Buddhagupta Raja, Tathagata Raja, Baladitya (who gave up his royal estate and himself became a recluse and Vajra. The sixth monastery was built by a king of Central India who also surrounded the entire establishment with a massive brick wall. The entire University with its residential students was maintained from an endowment of two hundred rent-free villages. The villager daily contributed rice, milk, butter and other necessities of life.

"A true University is," as Carlyle remarked, "a collection of books." And one cannot check the temptation of giving a little description of the famous Nalanda

library as furnished by Hiuen Tsang. The library was situated in a quarter known as Dharmagunj. It consisted of three grand buildings—Ratna Sagara, Ratnadodhi and Ratnaranjaka—all associated with Ratnam, i.e., jewels—there being three jewels of Buddhism called Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Ratnadadhi was a nine-storied building and contained the sacred scripts, especially the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*. The Mussalmans first destroyed the library, but it was subsequently repaired. The final destruction came from the Jains as we shall see later on.

Hiuen Tsang has immortalised the glory of the Nalanda University. He travelled all the way from China to India (630 A.D.) to study the great teachings of the Master in the land of his birth. His ambition was more than fulfilled by what he saw and learned at Nalanda. He could hardly find adequate words to praise the magnificent buildings of the University and still more magnificent wisdom that pervaded its atmosphere. At his time ten thousand students resided there. They all studied the Great Vehicle, though other branches of knowledge found their fit places in the curriculum. There were thousand men, at his time who could explain twenty collections of Sutras and Sastras, five hundred men who could explain thirty collections and perhaps ten men including Silabhadra, the head of the establishment who could explain fifty collections. Silabhadra alone could explain the entire collection, of Sutras and Sastras. His advanced age and mature wisdom earned for him unbounded reverence from his colleagues and pupils. Discourses were given daily from fifty pulpits and the students attended these without fail.

Students lived a life of simplicity and restraint. Hiuen Tsang was daily supplied with 120 Jambiras, 20 Pagas (areca nuts) and Mahasali rice "which was as large as the black bean and when cooked was aromatic and shining like no other rice at all." He was also given oil, butter and other articles of necessity. The prominent teachers of his time were Chandrapala, Gunamati, Sthiramati, Prabhamitra, Jinamitra, Jnanachandra and

Silabhadra. In Nalanda the names of the famous scholars were written on the lofty gates, surely a more permanent way of perpetuating their names than we have got at the present day.

I-tsing, another Chinese traveller, who came to Bengal in 673 A.D. wrote about Nalanda where he stayed for ten years. At his time, the University contained 8 halls and 300 apartments. He mentions some great scholars of Buddhistic philosophy, such as Nagarjuna, Asvaghosha, Vasubandhu, Asanga, Dignaga and Kamalasila.

The fame of the University was not confined within the boundaries of India. During its heyday, its fame spread far and wide. In 750 A.D. the Thibetan King sent for Kamalasila, the high priest of Nalanda, to preach in his country the Great Law and to confute the heretics. But everything in this world of phenomena must have its birth and growth as well as its decline and decay. The inevitable end of Nalanda came at last. After shining as a star of the first magnitude in the cultural firmament of India for about four centuries, the University showed signs of decay which set in from the middle of the 9th century. With the revival of Hinduism, the University of Vikramsila was started, and royal patronage was transferred from Nalanda to the newly-founded University. The buildings of magnificent Nalanda became old and dilapidated. The penniless Bhikshus could no longer look to royal coffers for their repairs and maintenance. The University finally fell a victim to the vandalism of the iconoclastic Mussalman hordes. Even after its destruction at their hands, the temples and the Chaityas were repaired by a sage named Munditabhadra. The final blow came from the Jains. The story runs thus: One day while religious sermons were going on, two poor Tirthika monks arrived there. Some young novices of the monastery insulted them by throwing dirty water on them. This made them furious. After propitiating the Sun for twelve years they performed a fire sacrifice and threw burning ambers inside the monastery. All the

buildings and libraries were burnt. A sad *finale* of a glorious chapter of Indian civilisation !

Even in that age when we find learning in Europe to be only in an incipient stage the Imperial University of Nalanda manifested a spirit of wonderful catholicity and broad mindedness. It has left behind it a lesson that every university can learn with great profit. Though professedly a Buddhistic seat of learning, it was by no means narrow or parochial. The students studied the Great Vehicle as well as works belonging to eighteen schools of Buddhism. Such subjects as the Vedas, the Hetu-vidya, the Savda-vidya, the Chikitsa-vidya, works on Tantra and Sankhya found due place and importance in the curriculum of the University. Such secular subjects as architecture and masenry were taught with equal zeal. But the grandest feature of Nalanda was not the amount of information that was put into the brain of the scholars, but the atmosphere which prevaded it and helped the students to get a true impress of the University. The spirit of humility and service was instilled into the minds of the students. The professors and the pupils maintained the closest touch with one another. The idea of serving the teachers was looked upon as a great glory by the taught. Hiuen Tsang writes, "The distinction of the students is very great at the present time, and there are many hundreds whose fame has rapidly spread through distant regions. Their conduct is pure and unblamable. The rules of their conduct are severe, and all priests are bound to observe them." No wonder that Nalanda has left an imperishable name among the perishable things of the world !

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## DESHABANDHU.

BY PANDIT SURESHWAR SHASTRI.

Deshabandhu C. R. Das was more prominent as a man than as a politician. In him, head, heart and hands combined in a beautiful harmony. It is perhaps inevitable in a fallen nation that even its politics is not mere politics but savours of a superior reality. It is but natural. When a nation falls, it is not this or that limb only that is endangered and impaired, but its very life-vigour wanes and spirits droop, resulting in gradual collapse of the different national functions. And what is needed then is not separate treatment of the ailing limbs, but the invigoration of the central spirit that sustains them. Therefore it has so happened that during the last years our leaders have been most of them much more than only politicians. They have been saints, mystics, poets, philosophers, artists, etc. They have dived deep into the inner strata of the national being and derived inspiration from them. They have felt that a mere surface adjustment will not do nor peacemeal action, but that the entire nation should be lifted up in all its different phases. Would it not be more correct to look upon Mahatma Gandhi, by far the greatest leader India has known for many years, as a spiritual reformer rather than a politician? It was because he felt that the national being of India is sustained by spirituality alone, and made it the pivot of his own life and movement, that he achieved such a conspicuous success in galvanising the national consciousness.

Similarly the man who followed him in the guidance of the nation, though not so well-known for his spirituality, was also an all-round expression of the national soul. Those who knew Chittaranjan Das at close quarters found in him not a politician so much—though such he was of a high order—as a man versatile in genius and above all

overflowing with the milk of human kindness which was the real secret of his great popularity and tremendous hold on the country and his lieutenants and followers. He stood not merely for the political upliftment of India, but rather for her spiritual rehabilitation of which political prosperity was only an aspect.

He may be said to have been a fine representative Bengalee. His life-career itself followed the steps of the evolution of Bengal. Before he came out into the open arena of politics, his work had lain in defending the servants of the nation, irrespective of their political creeds, and helping on the literary movements of his province. One has felicitously described him as the confluence of the three principal currents of the culture of Bengal, Logic, Saktaism and Vaishnavism. These undoubtedly are the three factors that constitute Bengali character. Endowed with a powerful intellect and keen reasoning faculties, and with an inordinate love of power, tempered however by a highly developed sense of the truly and nobly powerful, the Bengalee is yet as soft as a woman. His whole soul vibrates with the rhythm of beauty. He is the soul of poetry. He melts into every fine emotion, and is credited with great sympathetic and intuitive understanding. In fact, this last, his emotionalism, is the very basis and support of his being. Through it he looks at the world and evaluates everything. In Das all these three found dominant expression. A lawyer of all-India repute, he was also extremely masculine in temperament, bold and fearless. Even as a student in England when he was barely twenty-one years old, he evinced this aspect of his nature in a remarkable way. It seems an ex-editor of an Anglo-Indian paper, one John McLean, who was also a member of Parliament, once publicly ridiculed Indians as barbarians having no claim to culture or civilisation. Das, unable to brook this insult silently, called together a meeting of the resident Indians at the Exeter Hall in London and protested in a memorable speech against the unmerited strictures. His speech created quite a stir in the English press so much so that Gladstone



himself, then leader of the Liberal Party, invited him to speak again at a meeting held under his own presidency at Oldham. Das's defence of his civilisation was so able and strong that McLean had to retract his words with an apology.

This is but one of thousand instances. Once while pleading a case before an English magistrate in a mufassil Court in Bengal, Das was several times addressed by the magistrate as "Babu". Though "Babu" is quite respectable among his own people, Das felt that the magistrate used it as usual in a contemptuous sense. He therefore did not keep quiet, but thus said to him, "I say, Mr. C—, you are again calling me Babu, you like to hear many nasty expressions from me." It was enough for the white magistrate.

Political offence is not so rare now-a-days as in the beginning of political movement in India. Then the displeasure and frowns of the police and the bureaucracy were enough to scare away any man from his post of duty by a political offender. But Das was absolutely unaffected by these considerations. He felt that though many of them were misguided, their motives were pure, being the noble desire to see their motherland reinstalled in her ancient glory. He therefore never spared his help to them. Forsaken by others, they found help and sustenance from him. His noble nature fearlessly stood by them. In all these, however, it was his innate nobility and fineness of feeling that primarily prompted him to duty. His generous and large heart was the final arbiter of his duty and destiny. Hence we find that before he became recognised as a mighty power in the country's politics, his strongest inclinations lay towards those pursuits which conduce most to the play and refinement of emotions. Perhaps it is not generally known that he was a poet of no mean order. One of his books, *Sagar Sangit* "Songs of the Sea," has been versified by Sriyut Aurobindo Ghose. Besides this, he had several other books of poems to his credit.

His literary career was no accident. Literature in any

country is the field and instrument for the expression of national emotions and aspirations. It is more fundamentally true of an emotional race. To it, art and literature count as the best fruit of its life and the main channel for the flow of its being. In Bengal therefore we find that art and literature have been made the very foundation of her evolutional activities. Her politics, social service, religion, education, all are closely knit together with art and literature. Of all her achievements, it is undeniable that the most solid are her religion and art and literature. These have conferred on her a degree of steadiness, strength and pushfulness generally unavailable in other provinces. What wonder then that Chittaranjan whose soul throbbed in unison with the soul of Bengal, should choose the path of literature as the path of his self-realisation? He occupied a prominent place in the world of Bengali literature. He was a fine poet, we have said. He started a monthly which he significantly named *Narayana*, indicating that his objective was the realisation of the all-phased Divine in the varied manifestations of humanity, and conducted it for many years with conspicuous success.

His remarkable presidential address delivered in 1917 at the Calcutta session of the Bengal Provincial Conference marked the beginning of his real political career. From that time onward, his influence over the people grew steadily. Much need not be said on his subsequent career as that is yet fresh in the public memory. But we cannot omit to mention that the wonderful organising skill, high political acumen, unflagging zeal and unwearied perseverance that lay behind the establishment of the Swarajya Party, would have availed little if he had not possessed as he did an infinitely large heart and bought his lieutenants, body and soul, by his generous love. Swami Vivekananda once observed that a leader is not made in one life but has to be born for it. According to him, the difficulty does not lie in organisation and in making plans ; but the real test lies in holding widely different people together along the line of their common

sympathies. In fact, it is the heart that counts most in a leader. Through it, he catches the vision of the Deep and the Distant, which a mere discursive intellect, uninspired by the glowing fire of feeling, cannot even imagine. It makes the dead ideas flush with the roseate light of life and reality. Das's understanding of his country and its needs was through this magic medium. From this he derived the tremendous enthusiasm that characterised his later career. His enthusiasm evoked in its turn the ardour of his countrymen. It was through the door of the heart that he sought entrance into the soul of his land, and he was not refused. Love evoked love. From those who were his co-workers and followers he held nothing back. His house was their house, his possessions were their possessions. He left no barrier between himself and them. Who could resist such self-surrender? It is said that one of his near relations once told Das in reference to one of his lieutenants that he (the relative) hated him. Das's characteristic reply was: "The difficulty with *me* is that I cannot hate him." He had made himself one with them in a great love, and that love never hesitated to stand in defence of even the least of them. But there was nothing despotic about it, it granted absolute freedom to express itself and differ. But he expected that when a course had been determined upon, all differences of opinion should be merged in faithful action. Love and obedience thus joined hands in his organisation and endowed it with a unique vigour and efficiency.

Of his charities, it is difficult to speak adequately. No one was ever turned back empty-handed. His munificence extended in all directions, and there are to-day thousands who remember him as one who came as God's emissary in the moments of their crises. Even his enemies were not excluded. One of these once came for his help, and out of the six hundred rupees that constituted his purse at the time he gave away two hundred without a murmur. He had a large collection of rare and valuable Bengali Mss. which he prized highly. A prominent Bengali *littérateur* sought them as a gift to the

Bengali Academy of Letters. The gift was made instantly and unhesitatingly. As he had earned, so he had given away. But there was no self-consciousness about it all. He was contented by giving himself away. In the country's cause he gave himself unsparingly. He never liked or did anything half-way. In religion also he sought the path of absolute self-abandonment. In charities also his passion was the same, which culminated ultimately in his dedicating his all in the service of the mothers of Bengal. He was a very large-hearted man with everything large about him. This largeness of conception and feeling is characteristic of the Bengali people, which he delighted to call "Bengali Vedanta," and through him many seem to have caught a glimpse, however distant, of the soul of Bengal.

Not that therefore he was provincial in temperament and outlook. It happens that the outlook of Bengal is synthetic and all-comprehensive. It rejects none, but reconciles all the conflicting elements of life in the loving atmosphere of harmony. Head, heart and hands are allowed their legitimate play. The here and the hereafter blend into each other in the bosom of the Inmost Divine. For all these Das stood. He was therefore also a capable and fit leader of the Indian nation. It is said that some days before his passing he felt within himself a great spiritual change. It was but natural. For, did he not choose for himself the path along which the Divine communicates with the human, the path of renunciation and love?

How significant of his broad humanity is the following tale which one who was a fellow prisoner with him, recounts in his reminiscences! He says that while suffering incarceration in the Alipore jail during the N. C. O. movement, Das used to be waited upon by a convict, who was a perfect jail-bird, and whose life-career was one long tale of thefts and robberies. Of such an one it was difficult to contemplate any reform. But the impossible did happen. The loving sympathy of Das touched the heart of the man. Das offered to take

him into his service when he had served his term. Accordingly on the day of his release, Das sent a man to bring him to his house. For three long years he was constantly with Das, going about the country with him, doing faithful and loving service. How reminiscent of the immortal story of Victor Hugo's Jean Valjean! For like this fictitious prototype, he also, it is sad to say, went away during Das's last days at Darjeeling with silver plates from his Calcutta house, and nothing more has since been heard of him. It is quite possible that if Das had lived, the sequel would have been as happy as Jean Valjean's. For surely he would have come back and knelt with tears at his feet, and as surely he would have been pardoned and taken back. But Das died, and it never came about. But how eloquent is the episode of the greatness of C. R. Das, of his noble heart and broad sympathy for the fallen and the defeated! Of such stuff indeed are great souls made. He has passed away, but has left behind a memory which will ever remain green in the love and gratitude of the nation. Verily, he did not come out of the past, but was rather a forecast, however imperfect, of the future Bengal and India.

### SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 324.)

जनस्तु हेतुः सुखदुःखयोश्चेत्किमात्मनश्चात्र हि भौमयोस्तत् ॥

जिह्वां क्वचित्संदशति स्वद्विस्तद्वेदनायां कतमाय कुप्येत् ॥ ५१ ॥

51. If the body be the cause of pleasure and pain, the Atman has nothing<sup>1</sup> to do with it, for it all concerns the gross and subtle bodies, which are material in their nature. If one<sup>2</sup> chances to bite one's tongue with one's own teeth, whom should one be angry with for causing that pain?

[Verses 51—56 elaborate the idea of verse 43.

<sup>1</sup> Has nothing &c.—Neither causes nor experiences pleasure and pain.

2 If one &c.—The point of the illustration is this: Supposing that the pain caused by another did affect the Atman, still there is no ground for anger, for the same Atman is present in all. The two bodies are virtually one body.]

दुःखस्य हेतुर्यदि देवतास्तु किमात्मनस्तत्र विकारयोस्तत् ॥

यदङ्गमङ्गेन निहन्यते क्वचित् क्रुध्येत कस्मै पुरुषः स्वदेहे ॥५२॥

52. If the gods be the cause of pain, the Atman has nothing to do with it, for it concerns the two gods which alone are affected by it. If one<sup>1</sup> limb of a person be struck by another limb, with whom should he be angry in his own body?

[1 If one &c.—Suppose the hand strikes the mouth, or the mouth bites the hand, then it is the respective presiding deities, viz., Fire and Indra, who, being finite, are concerned in it. And if this happens between two bodies, instead of one, then also the situation is unaltered, for the presiding deity of each organ is the same in all bodies. The Atman in any case is unaffected.]

आत्मा यदि स्यात्सुखदुःखहेतुः किमन्यतस्तत्र निजस्वभावः ॥

न ह्यात्मनोऽन्यद्यदि तन्मृषा स्यात्क्रुध्येत कस्मान्न सुखं न दुःखं ॥

53. If the Atman<sup>1</sup> be the cause of pleasure and pain, nothing in that case happens through any extraneous agency; that pleasure and pain are of the essence of itself, for there is nothing<sup>2</sup> other than the Atman; if there be, it must be a fiction.<sup>3</sup> So whom should one be angry with? There is neither<sup>4</sup> pleasure nor pain.

[1 Atman—in its individual aspect, as Jiva, that is.

2 Nothing &c.—as is borne out by numerous Sruti texts.

3 Fiction—being superimposed by Nescience.

4 Neither &c.—Only the Atman is.]

ग्रहा निमित्तं सुखदुःखयोश्चेत्किमात्मनोऽजस्य जनस्य ते वै ॥

ग्रहेर्ग्रहस्यैव वदन्ति पीडां क्रुध्येत कस्मै पुरुषस्ततोऽन्यः ॥ ५४ ॥

54. If the planets be the cause of pleasure and pain, the birthless Atman has nothing to do with it, for the planets influence the body only. Besides, one planet is said<sup>1</sup> to influence adversely<sup>2</sup> another planet. And the

Atman<sup>3</sup> is different from either the planet or the body. So whom should one be angry with?

[1 *Said*—by astrologers.

2 *Adversely &c.*—according to their position in the zodiac.

3 *Atman &c.*—It is only due to his mistaken identification with the body, born under a particular constellation, that a man comes under planetary influence. In reality he is the ever-free Atman.]

कर्मास्तु हेतुः सुखदुःखयोश्चेत्किमात्मनस्तद्धि जडाजडत्वे ॥

देहस्त्वचित्पुरुषोऽयं सुपर्णः क्रुध्येत कस्मै नहि कर्ममूलम् ॥५५॥

55. If indeed work<sup>1</sup> be the cause of pleasure and pain, how does it affect the Atman, for work is possible to an agency which is both sentient<sup>2</sup> and insentient?<sup>3</sup> But the body is insentient, and the Atman is Pure Intelligence. So there is no such thing as work, the (alleged) root of pleasure and pain. Then whom should one be angry with?

[1 *Work &c.*—as the Mimamsakas hold.

2 *Sentient*—Because without intelligence purposive activity is impossible.

3 *Insentient*—Because only matter, and not Spirit, is subject to change.]

कालस्तु हेतुः सुखदुःखयोश्चेत्किमात्मनस्तत्र तदात्मकोऽसौ ॥

नाग्नेर्हि तापो न हिमस्य तत्स्यात्क्रुध्येत कस्मै न परस्य द्वन्द्वम् ॥

56. If Time be the cause of pleasure and pain, how does it affect the Atman, for It is one<sup>1</sup> with Time? Surely<sup>2</sup> a flame is not adversely affected by fire, nor a hailstone by cold. The Supreme Self is never affected by the pairs of opposites.<sup>3</sup> So whom should one be angry with?

[1 *One &c.*—Because Time is identified with Brahman.

2 *Surely &c.*—Things which are of the same essence never harm one another.

3 *Pairs of opposites*—such as pleasure and pain, etc.]

न केनचित्त्वापि कथंचनास्य द्वन्द्वोपरागः परतः परस्य ॥

यथाहमः संसृतिरूपिणः स्यादेवं प्रबुद्धो न बिभेति भूतैः ॥ ५७ ॥

57. This Atman, which is beyond Prakriti,<sup>1</sup> is nowhere subjected in any way to the pairs of opposites by anything, as is the case with the ego,<sup>2</sup> which conjures up

the relative existence. The illumined man is never afraid of the material world.

[1 *Prakṛiti*—which alone, as the primal state of the universe, is subject to modifications.

2 *Ego &c.*—This it is which superimposes the universe on the Atman. It has been aptly called the 'knot between Pure Intelligence and matter.']

एतां स आस्थाय परात्मनिष्ठामध्यासितां पूर्वतमेमंहर्षिभिः ॥

अहं तरिष्यामि दुरन्तपारं तमो मुकुन्दांघ्रिनिषेवयैव ॥ ५८ ॥

58. So I shall practise this devotion to the Supreme Self which the great sages of old had taken recourse to, and only worshipping the feet of the Lord, I shall cross the limitless wilderness of ignorance.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

निर्विघ्नं नष्टद्विषो गतक्लमः प्रव्रज्य गां पर्यटमान इत्थम् ॥

निराकृतोऽसद्भिरपि स्वधर्मादकम्पितोऽमुं मुनिराह गायाम् ॥ ५९ ॥

The Lord said :

59. This was the song sung by that sage who, having lost his wealth and getting disgusted with the world, wandered over the earth as a monk, free from anxiety, and who, though insulted thus by the wicked, remained unshaken in his path of duty.

सुखदुःखप्रदो नान्यः पुरुषस्यात्मविभ्रमः ॥

मित्रोदासोनरिपवः संसारस्तमसः कृतः ॥ ६० ॥

60. The world consisting of friends and neutrals and foes, which affects a man with pleasure and pain, is a phantasm of his mind owing to ignorance and nothing but that.

तस्मात्सर्वात्मना तात निगृहाण मनो धिया ॥

मय्यावेशितया युक्त एतावान्योगसंग्रहः ॥ ६१ ॥

61. Therefore, My friend, possessed of an intellect wholly attached to Me, control the mind perfectly. This is the very gist of Yoga.



य एतां मिश्रुणा गीतां ब्रह्मनिष्ठां समाहितः ॥

धारयन् श्रावयन् शृण्वन्ब्रह्मैर्नैवामिभूयते ॥ ६२ ॥

62. He who listens to, understands and recites before others this song of steadfastness in Brahman, as sung by the Sannyasin, is no more overcome by the pairs of opposites.\*

## THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

In submitting the report of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary for the year 1925, we appeal to the kind-hearted public for a more generous and active sympathy for our humble service to the poor and the diseased Narayanas in these interior mountain tracts. As the appended statements will show, the number of persons who require medical relief but are too poor to pay for it, is not inconsiderable. We specially require liberal contribution to the permanent fund of the Dispensary in order to enable it to render more extended and efficient service to the people as well as secure its stability and better equipment. May we hope that our appeal will not go unheeded?

The following statements will indicate the extent of our service :—

### (a) OUTDOOR HOSPITAL RELIEF.

Altogether 3162 cases were treated from the out-door dispensary, of which 3159 were new cases and 3 old. Of these patients, 1425 were men, 698 women and 1039 children, belonging to various castes and creeds.

### (b) INDOOR HOSPITAL RELIEF.

The number of indoor patients admitted into the hospital was 35, of whom 27 were cured and 8 relieved.

\* For want of space this series will be discontinued from the next issue. The remaining portion will be included in the second part of the book which is expected to come out in the course of the year. We regret that the June instalment of "Sri Krishna and Uddhava" was repeated last month through oversight.—ED.

Among them, there were 16 men, 12 women and 7 children of different castes and creeds.

(c) STATEMENT OF DISEASES.

Name of Diseases.	Indoor.	Outdoor.	Total.
Dysentery ...	...	27	27
Pox ...	...	6	6
Fever ...	8	195	203
Malaria ...	9	311	320
Rheumatism ...	...	115	115
Debility ...	...	81	81
Diseases of the Eye ...	2	545	547
"    "    "    Ear ...	...	33	33
"    "    "    Nose ...	...	2	2
Paralysis ...	...	2	2
Pneumonia ...	1	7	8
Asthma ...	2	19	21
Cough, H. cough etc. ...	5	236	241
Colic ...	1	112	112
Piles ...	...	3	3
Spleen ...	...	15	15
Dropsy ...	1	12	13
Diseases of the Skin & Ulcer ...	1	950	951
Injury ...	...	69	69
Male diseases ..	...	27	27
Female ..	...	14	14
Worms ...	1	34	35
Gout ...	...	5	5
Lumbago ...	...	32	32
Diseases of the Tooth ...	...	8	8
Operations ...	...	26	26
Phthisis ...	...	1	1
Dyspepsia and Constipation ...	...	144	144
Boil ...	3	45	48
Pain (local) ...	...	18	18
Diarrhoea ...	1	70	71
<b>TOTAL ...</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3162</b>	<b>3197</b>



proficiency in the sacred scriptures of the Hindus and the Western science and philosophy combined with his lucid style has made the book specially attractive. The first part deals with the doctrine of Karma in all its metaphysical and ethical bearings, the second with the theory of transmigration. Belief in the doctrines of Karma and transmigration is one of the many common features of almost all the schools of Indian philosophy. The author has spared no pains to make the book easy-reading, substantiating his remarks and conclusions by facts and arguments in the light of modern scientific research. The doctrine of evolution and the origin of species of Darwin, the mutation theory, Mendelism, Creative Evolution theory of Bergson and such others have been brought in and discussed. We hope the book will have a large sale.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### SWAMI BODHANANDA'S TOUR IN THE PACIFIC COAST.

A friend writes from America :

"After spending the winter in California, Swami Bodhananda has returned to New York, visiting Oregon and Washington en route.

"He left New York on the 6th of November, 1925, thereby escaping much of the severity of the eastern winter. Arriving in Los Angeles on the 10th of November, he was met by friends, with whom he visited Los Angeles and vicinity.

"Though the primary object of the Swami's trip was rest, he gave lectures and held classes in Los Angeles during December and January.

"Coming north to San Francisco in April, he was the guest of Swami Prakashananda at the Temple of the Vedanta Society for a month. Here many hours were spent in happy reminiscences of old days in India when the Swamis were together in the early days of the Society. Here, too, Swami Bodhananda gave four lectures and held

four classes on the Gita, which were much appreciated by all who were so fortunate as to attend ; and, as one of the members wrote me : 'He has helped us much in our meditation classes. He radiates great power during meditation.'

"Resuming his trip in early May, and journeying still farther north, he visited Swami Prabhavananda and the newly founded Vedanta Centre in Portland, Oregon, and gave three lectures under its auspices. There was much entertaining for him by the members of the Society, during the week he spent with Swami Prabhavananda, and when he bade Portland 'Good-bye' there were many expressions of regret at the shortness of his stay, for he had endeared himself to all in his brief visit.

"Coming to Seattle, Washington, on the 11th of May, he gave two lectures under the auspices of the Theosophical Lodge. After the final lecture he came to Tacoma to spend a few days quietly in the home of a friend, before his lectures in the Universalist Church on the following Saturday and Sunday evenings. One comment on the lectures which I will repeat here, voices the thought of nearly all who heard the Swami's lectures : 'How beautifully he spoke ! So scholarly ! One feels that he speaks of that which he knows through personal realisation.'

"During the time Swami Bodhananda was in Tacoma, Swami Prabhavananda made his second visit to Seattle, giving three lectures under the auspices of the Theosophical Lodge and one on Sunday morning in the Chamber of Commerce Auditorium for the Congress of Religions, sponsored by the First Unitarian Church of Seattle.

"As on Swami's previous visit, the large hall was crowded to capacity, many standing throughout the entire lecture. By the tense interest during the lectures and the eager questioning afterwards, the people prove they are hungry for the wonderful truths of Vedanta.

"On Monday Swami Prabhavananda came to Tacoma to be with Swami Bodhananda for a few hours to bid him

farewell as he left for New York, *via* Chicago, on the late afternoon train.

"In the evening Swami Prabhavananda also lectured in the Universalist Church, Tacoma, going back to Portland the following morning.

"Much to the delight of the members and friends of Vedanta in the west, Swami Bodhananda has promised to visit us again next year. In speaking of his travels he expressed himself as delighted with the friends and followers of Vedanta wherever he went, and with the work of Swami Prakashananda and Swami Prabhavananda in California, Oregon and Washington, and said he realised an awakening in the people for a higher spiritual understanding and felt the necessity of new Centres where competent and authorised teachers could expound the teachings of Vedanta on its broad universal principles. 'This spiritual need,' he said, 'must be met'."

#### BUDDHISM AND THE FUTURE.

It may be interesting to note what Mr. Har Dayal, the same perhaps, whose name is not quite unknown in India, has got to say on the future of Buddhism. Our readers may remember that in course of last May's editorial on the same subject, we opined that the negative philosophy of Buddhism has little chance at the present time of getting any strong hold on the popular mind. We said that this philosophy, in fact, was not the strong point of Buddhism. Its strength and value lies in the personality of its great founder, and that alone can again sway the minds of men. Mr. Har Dayal believes that of all religions Buddhism comes nearest the Truth of things, and suggests certain internal reforms in an article contributed to the May issue of *The Young East* (Tokyo, Japan), before, he thinks, Buddhism can meet the needs of mankind. He proposes that all the superstitions that have gathered through ages round Buddha and his religion should be mercilessly lopped off. He wishes that Nirvana should be interpreted not in the usual negative way, but as "Deliverance from sin and sorrow in

this life." We must reject metaphysics, he says,—“From barren Metaphysics to fruitful Science”—should be our watch-word. Buddhism must not insist on vegetarianism, and its preachers should be married men and women.

Some of these suggestions are fine, it must be admitted, as for example, the clearance of superstitions and the positive interpretation of Nirvana. But we confess, we fail to see the points of the other suggestions. Why should the preachers be necessarily married? “Celibacy as a principle is unnatural and anti-social. It leads to mental impurity and other evils. It deprives the men-preachers of the ennobling society of women, and it robs the women-preachers of the joy and inspiration that come from the company and friendship of men.” Indeed! It is wonderful how people sometimes talk! We are all natural and pure people, and those great ones,—Buddha, Christ, Sankara, Ramanuja, Sri Ramakrishna, and the monkish hosts that followed in the footsteps of those masters, were all unnatural, anti-social and impure! Fortunately however the truth and strength of monasticism lies elsewhere than in the good-will of people of Mr. Har Dayal's ilk. To think that the religion, essentially monastic in outlook and preached and founded by a prince of monks, should have to forego the yellow garb in order that it may suit the modern taste! We concede that merely not marrying is not always fruitful of good; for persons who have no self-control, who cannot check the impulses and passions of their heart, can be of little good to either themselves or society. They would rather prove a menace to social peace, being tempted to lead irresponsible lives. It was on this consideration that the Hindu society has always discountenanced celibacy except in the service of a high spiritual ideal. But does it follow therefore that marriage would supply the spiritual strength required in the life of a religious preacher?

The writer commends the Buddhistic rejection of Personal God and Creation as scientific. We have yet to know that science is nihilistic. And why again should

metaphysics go to the wall? Is the conflict between metaphysics and science absolute?

Mr. Har Dayal's noblest suggestion, however, is when he pleads that "Neo-Buddhism should be expansive and all-inclusive." He rightly says, "It should honour and accept Zoroaster, Christ, Muhamad, Socrates, Confucius, Mahavira, Moses and all other great teachers of the past. .... We regard Buddha only as a great man ; we can honour all great men and study all great scriptures. Neo-Buddhism should take all these historic tributaries and thus become the broad River of Religion for all nations. Synthesis is the ideal of the future..... It will absorb in itself Christianity, Islam and all other systems, past and present. New realms will thus be annexed to the Republic of Religion under the flag of Buddhism. This should be our new idea..... No mere rivalry with other systems ; but synthesis and assimilation all-round."

Noble aspirations these. Not only Buddhism, but other religions also, we think, should aim at this synthetic ideal. But we fail to see how the reforms suggested by the writer—e.g., rejection of Personal God, immortality of soul, the fact of creation and metaphysics, and insistence on married teachers etc.—can make of Buddhism that ideal Republic of Religions in which all creeds and faiths will live in harmony. It looks as though the proposed reforms, if carried out, will make it extremely narrow and autocratic. One would like to have more light from Mr. Har Dayal on the methods he would like to employ to achieve the desired end. In the mean while, we may recommend to him the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the great teacher of the Harmony and Synthesis of Religions and his chief disciple, who, in our opinion, of all men have contributed most towards the realisation of a Republic of Religions.

#### INDIAN CULTURE IN THE WEST.

We are indebted to the July issue of *The Modern Review* for the following informations about the culture of Sanskrit in Russia.



Sanskrit studies began there as early as 1880 with Professor J. Kossowitz who edited portions of the *Mahabharata* in Sanskrit. His pupil Minayeff published the text and translation of *Pratimokṣhasutra* and a Pali grammar with introduction and also *Bodhi-Charyavatara*. Next comes Prof. O. Boethlingk, a German scholar, who published the famous St. Petersburg dictionary at the expense of the Russian Academy in 1855 in seven volumes, which is considered the best Sanskrit dictionary that has yet been written. He also published two editions of Panini and a translation of *Mricchakatika* and of some of the Upanishads. The most eminent Sanskrit scholar in Russia at the present day is Prof. Th. Stcherbatsky. He studied Nyaya in India for two years, can speak Sanskrit as fluently as a European language and has been working for a very long time on the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism. He is the author of several works on Bauddha, Yoga and Nyaya philosophies, and he writes in a letter to Prof. Surendranath Das Gupta, the reputed author of the first history of Indian philosophy, that he has in preparation a full translation of the *Nyayavindutika* and a treatise upon the Logic of Dignaga and Dharmakirti. He adds: "You know my high opinion of the works of these great men, whom I consider to be the greatest philosophers of India and of the whole of mankind."

Incidentally it may be mentioned here that Prof. Das Gupta was one of the three persons specially invited from India by the Russian Academy of Sciences (which include also the study of Sanskrit), in last September when it celebrated its bi-centenary. And though he was unable to accept the invitation, still the Academy of Sciences paid a tribute to his Sanskrit scholarship by presenting him with a copy of the big St. Petersburg Sanskrit-German dictionary which is now out of print and exceedingly costly. One is glad at this appreciation of Indian culture and Indian scholarship.

Another similarly happy news is the invitation of Prof. Radhakrishnan by the University of Oxford to

deliver the Upton Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion for the year 1926, a position which was held in previous years by eminent thinkers like Dean Inge, Estlin Carpenter, L. P. Jacks of the Hibbert Journal and Miss Evelyn Underhill. Prof. Radhakrishnan occupies the George V Chair of Philosophy in the Calcutta University and is an author of considerable charm and reputation. Besides his book on contemporary Western philosophy, he has also a history of Indian philosophy to his credit. His equal understanding of both Eastern and Western philosophies and his easy mastery of a fascinating English style make him peculiarly fit to interpret Hindu thought to the Occident. And we are highly gratified at the happy choice of his subject in the Upton Lectures. His theme has been the synthetic genius of Hinduism. The Professor showed how Hinduism, when it was confronted with a heterogeneous mass of cultures, races, creeds and superstitions in the great continent of India, tried with great success to bring the great majority of the millions of such people to a higher level of culture, social system, habitual conventions and more than all, to a greater and nobler conception of God. According to Hinduism, every one has a right to follow the truth of his experience, and there need not be any quarrel among the different experiences of the individuals, so long as the goal is the same, the realisation of the Divine, and so long as the paths are made to lead towards the same goal. In this way the fathers of the Hindu society have brought the different races that came to settle down in India at different periods of the ancient history into the all-embracing fold of their religion. And, as the Professor said, if only the world follows the example of Hinduism, the different peoples inhabiting this earth will reach the Ultimate Goal with less friction and clearer conscience.

We are glad Professor Radhakrishnan dwelt beautifully and emphatically on this great message of Harmony, which is such a desideratum in the present-day West. His work there will not end with the Upton Lectures. *The Calcutta Review* (May-June) tells us that the British

Institute of Philosophical Studies has asked him to deliver a course of four lectures in place of Dean Inge who, it was originally arranged, should speak at the Institute during the months of May and June. The Prof. has also agreed to address the Aristotelian Society of Cambridge and the Institute of Philosophical Studies, London. Across the ocean Prof. Radhakrishnan is going out as the representative of the Calcutta University to attend the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy to be held at the Harvard University in September next. The University of Chicago has elected him Haskell Lecturer for the year 1926. In his lectures in America he will deal with ancient Hinduism and modern philosophical tendencies. He will also deliver a course of lectures to the University of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and to the Theological Colleges like the Union Theological Seminar of New York and the Specific School of Religion, California.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, JAFFNA (CEYLON).

The Ramakrishna Society of Jaffna decided some time back to establish a Students' Home in Jaffna, with a view to provide free board and education to orphans and poor deserving students. To give effect to this resolution, the President of the Society, Swami Vipulananda, and some friends visited Colombo in April last and appealed for funds. The appeal met with a ready response, and friends and sympathisers subscribed liberally. It was then decided to make a beginning with six students for the present, and increase the number gradually according to the amount of financial support the public are able to give. The formal opening ceremony of the Home took place on Sunday, the 6th June, at 7 a.m. Three students were then admitted into the Home. In the evening the Swamiji delivered a very instructive and inspiring speech on "The Student-life at Gurukula," and dwelt on the great necessity of such a Home for Hindus, whose poor children were often lost to the community on account of the indifference of the Hindus to their welfare.

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXX] SEPTEMBER, 1926.

No. 9

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

27th January, 1921.

The Swami said: "In mind is everything. Therefore 'act with the consent of the mind.'

" 'Woman is like unto a blade of grass to a Brahmacharin. So is death to a hero, Shastras to a knower of Brahman, and the world to one who is free from desires.' 'Like unto a blade of grass,' that is to say, insignificant, worthless. But it is better to look upon woman as mother. The Shastras are not binding on one who has realised the Self,—he is above all limitations."

"Swamiji used to say that even a bad deed, if it is to be done at all, must be done manfully, that will greatly minimise its evil. There was a man who had committed fifty-two crimes. Once he found himself called upon to do another crime for the benefit of a neighbour. Such is the effect of unselfish action that this last crime saved him from the dire effects of the past ones."

A student came seeking his advice as to the desirability of his joining the Non-co-operation movement. The Swami said to him: "Be fixed in *one* thing. Do not waver. 'Do not stand on two boats'."

*28th January, 1921.*

Many of the Brahmacharins would be initiated into Sannyasa in a few days. The atmosphere was tense with the expectation of that great event. The talk therefore naturally turned on this and the Swami observed: "One must be ready to sacrifice even life to maintain one's monastic vows. Such determination is a necessary qualification of Sannyasa. The Master used to say that he alone is fit to be a monk who can fall down without struggle from the top of a palmyra tree."\*

The Swami then narrated an authentic story of a monk. "He was a very spirited man—the Sadhu. He was once invited by a Seth to his house. When the Sadhu went there, the tricky Seth somehow managed to shut him in a room with his (the Seth's) young wife. Finding himself helpless and endangered, the Sadhu prayed to God, 'O Paramatman, why hast Thou thus endangered my vow which I have so long maintained unsoiled?' No sooner had he finished his prayer than he felt an urgent call of nature. The woman, unwilling to let him out, directed him to an adjoining room.

"Then he felt an overpowering mood coming on him. And in that mood, he undressed and smeared himself all over with his excreta and came back to the woman. She was struck with horror at the sight and cried aloud to have the door opened, and when it was done, she fled out of the room and the Sadhu also went out unmolested and washed himself.

"Thus does the Lord save His earnest devotees. I travelled widely and long in the Punjab, but never did

\* That is to say, the monk must give up all thoughts of himself in absolute self-surrender to God.

I meet with any such trouble. While wandering in the Limdi state, Swamiji was detained by a band of *Vijamârgis*\* in one of their houses. A boy happened to come there. Swamiji wrote of his danger on a potsherd with a piece of charcoal and sent it through him to the Prince of Limdi. The Prince at once sent his men and had him rescued."

D— had gone mad. The Swami was anxious about him and said: "I prayed to the Master to graciously bring him round as one who has taken shelter at his feet. But will he grant my prayer?"

1st February, 1921.

N— read out the last four chapters of the Katha Upanishad, which the Swami followed with extensive comments.

When N. read, "One must apprehend Him in the concept 'He is' and also in His essential principle, but when he hath grasped Him as the *Is*, then the essential of Him dawneth upon a man," the Swami told an anecdote of the Master. "A man one day came to Sri Ramakrishna and sought his instructions about the means of God realisation. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'There is a tank in our part of the country called *Hâldâr-Pukur*, in which one or another always catches fish. He sits there with the fishing rod in his hand. By and by a fish comes to the bait and disturbs the water. Then the man feels that a fish has come, fish is. This makes him patient and enthusiastic, and he waits on till at last he actually hooks and drags it up to the ground. Similar is the realisation of God.' After long and strenuous Sadhana one is convinced in one's inmost heart of the existence of God. Then one comes to know Him better and more intimately.

"The Upanishads lay strong and repeated emphasis on steadiness."

The eagerly looked-for ceremony of Sannyasa had

\* An obscure sect indulging in questionable practices in the name of religion.

taken place yesterday. And after the ceremony, L— had read out the first two chapters of the Katha Upanishad as also that portion of the Brihadâraṇyaka, in which is recorded the renunciation of Yâjñavalkya. The Swami said in reference to it that when they had their Sannyasa, Swamiji also had taken them into a grove at Baranagore and read to them that particular section of the Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad.

The Swami recited from an invocation : “ ‘My soul is Thyself, and my intelligence is Thy Divine consort. The vital forces are Thy companions and the body is Thy home. Communion with the phenomenal world is Thy worship and sleep is the realising of Samadhi. When my legs walk, they really go round Thee. All my speech is Thy invocation and all my work Thy worship.’ ” He also recited a Bengali song of which the purport was that everything is Brahman and the burden “O my mind, worship the Mother !”

## BHAGAVAN SRI KRISHNA

The Lord descends on the earth in darkness, rain and storm. The world sleeps dead-like. Rains fall, the lightning flashes and the thunder roars. Horrid dreams oppress the peace of the good and the evil revel in uncouth orgies. The saintly are shut up in dungeons to patient, solitary prayers. But the Lord sees all and listens to the prayers rising from contrite hearts. He bides his time, and then, unexpectedly, foiling human calculations, he descends to the earth—he, the supreme bliss and peace of the world.

Even so it happened on a certain night in the dim past in a prison cell in the city of Mathura. That night the heavens broke down in thunder-claps and torrents of rain ; the winds howled and the lightning flashed luridly. The Jamuna rose in flood, and the gloomy pall of an indescribable pain lay heavy on the heart of the wicked

Kamsa. But in the cell, Devaki and Vasudeva waited trembling in hope and agony. Their hearts were sore within them fearing the fate their new-born child would inevitably meet at Kamsa's hands. This pious couple had known as had all men of Mathura, that the Lord would be born as their eighth child. In hope and despair, joy and agony, they had been looking forward to this supreme event. The hour was nigh and only a miracle could save even the Divine child from the fatal hands of their persecutor.

Then—Oh the ecstasy of it—when the child was at last born, the souls of the long-suffering parents swooned in delight and an infinite consolation lay like a balm on their lacerated hearts. The powers of men are naught before the will of the Lord. The chains fell off the ankles of Vasudeva. The heavy doors swung outwards of their own accord before him ; and the ever-awake guards and soldiers lay senseless in heavy slumbers. But how to ford the flooded river? Is it not a jackal walking only knee-deep across the waters? A mighty serpent held its spread hood against rains over the father and the Divine child. Arriving on the other bank, the anxious father found the village of the innocent and unsophisticated cowherds sleeping too deeply to know the change of babies. Slowly he laid his child in the arms of the sleeping Yashoda and hurried back with her new-born baby by the way he had come to the dungeons of Kamsa, and the doors closed of themselves.

And Kamsa learnt that the Lord was born and thrived safe beyond his reach. And the Divine child grew in love and beauty and became the idol, the very soul, of the cowherd settlement.

It is always thus the Lord comes among men. "When religion decays and irreligion prevails," then is he born among the very wicked themselves. For the proud and the wicked are also the inheritors of the best culture of the land ; and though they occasionally debase themselves by its abuse, they also rise and lead mankind by its powers. And the Lord who is also man, is the soul and mouth-



piece of the nation's many-featured life. But though out of the degraded best he comes, he dwells and grows among only the meek, the innocent and pure. The wicked proud seek to destroy his rising power. But eventually he eludes their machinations and thrives on the loving service of the neglected and the pure. And with the passing of days their pride is humbled to the dust and the righteous generations rise on its remains.

But are these—the coming of the Lord and his succour—only symbolically true or are they also historical? Often the voice of doubt whispers, "Did God truly come and live amongst men? Should we believe the miracles that are ascribed to him?" May be the imagination of the faithful has embellished the core of fact, adding new features to the original story. But miracles, or such as are called miracles, are not impossible of happening. Who has gauged the powers of God? Who has ever sounded the depths of even human possibilities? We do not wonder at the accustomed,—we call them *natural*. But how little we know of even the natural! We see scarcely below the surface. Whenever therefore the unaccustomed face us, we stare at them in awe and call them miracles. Little is known to us of the truths and workings of the Inner Being of which the expression is our world. But our ignorance of it cannot necessarily stifle its functioning. It works on unperceived, and sometimes bursts into our narrow vision bedecked with the strange light of the unknown.

God is not so far off from men as we blindly think, nor is he a passive witness of the play of life. He is unceasing in his ministrations to the world of his creation and hugs it in his bosom as his other self. What wonder then that he would show himself forth in forms dear and familiar to man? So he comes and dwells amongst us. A few recognise him, some feel his transcendental charms and others his power. History bears repeated testimony to such Divine interference in the process of human affairs, unaccountable by empirical laws, so profound, elusive and superhuman it seems!

But even if the stories of Incarnations be unhistorical, they are not therefore less *real*. The question of historicity has been often unnecessarily emphasised in relation to the Divine men. *The truth and reality of spiritual things do not depend on their being historical ; but on their perceptibility in the superconscious vision.* History is concerned with the sensuous and the temporal only. We see men and the world. But that is no proof of their *spiritual value*. To be considered *spiritually* true and real, they must be perceivable otherwise than through the senses, that is, in that plane of consciousness where abides the Eternal. So to judge the truth and reality of the Incarnations, the *only* point to be decided is whether they are realisable by the superconscious mind, and not whether they lived and died like any of us, historical beings. Are the gods and angels non-existent and unreal because they are not historical and were never born as earthly beings? They have been perceived in all ages and countries, not by the physical eye but by the exalted spirit. They are denizens of higher and finer worlds and are revealed to the clarified vision.

Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, they all live similarly in the heart of the Eternal and are the "eternal forms" of God. From age to age they have stepped into the process of human life as prophets and Incarnations. No Hindu ever thinks Goddess Kali to be unreal because she did not walk the earth clothed in the corporeal vesture. Even so Krishna is real, whether he was born or not of Devaki and Vasudeva, or lived or not among the cowherds.

The Avatars have thus two distinct aspects, the historical and the spiritual. Objectively, the historical aspect seems more important and real. But in spiritual valuation, the supersensuous aspect alone concerns us. For one may be intensely historical, but if he is unrealisable by the superconscious mind, he is spiritually *nothing*. But the Incarnations and their *lilâ* (performances) have been and are seen superconsciously by countless devotees. *Therefore the question of historicity has nothing to do*

*with religion.* Have the saints seen the visions of the crucified Christ? No matter whether he was born as man or not. Have the *Bhāktas* seen the *Gopilā* in their super-sensuous visions? Who cares then whether Krishna is historical or not?

But it will be said: "There are incontestable proofs that what the faithful look upon as the *lilā* of the Incarnations belong all to this world. There may be sometimes a core of facts, but to it have been added the lavish imaginations of the devotees. Ancient and contemporary traditions have been transfused into them, and also subsequent events. This is how the Avatars are built up." It must be admitted that the contentions are apparently real. For instance, the life of Sri Krishna as described and believed by the orthodox is an aggregate of miracles and incongruities. His birth itself savours of the impossible. The childhood is studded over with miracles. He is made to indulge in adult emotions when he was still a young lad. There is a strange resemblance between his exploits and those of Herakles of Greece, so much so that Megasthenes reporting about the year 300 B. C. on India to Seleukos Nikator states that "Herakles is worshipped at Mathura and Clisbothra." There is also a unique similarity noticeable between the infancies of Krishna and Christ. The *Gopilā* is only a transformation of the ancient spring festival. Facts, traditions and imagination have thus combined in disregard of all canons of reality and chronology to create the baffling personality of Sri Krishna, indeterminate, supernatural. The story of the Christ also is equally vague and indeterminate. Higher criticism would deny his historicity *in toto*.

This analysis and interpretation of the historian are justified by his point of view. But the version of the faithful—that the story of the Incarnation is derived from superconscious knowledge—is also true. We cannot deny either of them,—the truth of the historical researches as well as of the *lila* having been actually realised by seers.

How to explain this strange parallelism? How happens it that unrelated and often distant events of history allied with traditions and imagination unconsciously reproduce an integral spiritual reality? Two explanations can be offered. The one is that the historian's version alone is real and the so-called superconscious visions are products of enlivened imagination. The devotee believing in the truth of the traditional story, dwells constantly on it with the concentrated ardour of his soul; and the consequence is the objectification of the subjective ideas. But this explanation is scarcely tenable in face of certain important considerations. First, the visions have often come unsolicited and unthought-of, without any effort of the mind. Secondly, creatures of imagination can by no means be more real than their creator. In visions however, the Divine personalities appear infinitely more real and powerful than the perceiver. Thirdly, the scheme of the outer and the inner universe does not so depend on the individual mind that it can by mere will transform it. But mystic visions are found to actually produce such a fundamental change. Not only is one blessed with such visions transformed for ever, but the world also is transfigured and spiritualised for him.

The second explanation suggests that the truth is the other way about. It is not that imagination makes evanescent events immortal. But because the events already exist in the heart of God in their fullness and perfection, therefore do we perceive them revealed in the process of time. All things already exist in the Cosmic Mind. They are struggling to manifest themselves through time and space. Hence they appear crude, imperfect and distorted. They are more suggestions of the realities than the realities themselves. The universe is the wreckage of the Infinite on the shores of the finite. Whenever the soul of man piercing through the disfiguring and blinding veil reaches the mind of God, these eternal ideas—the forms and *lilās* of God are revealed to him in their pristine effulgence. It is thus that the Divine forms came to the knowledge of men. In this quest of the soul,

environments are often helpful and furnish the original impetus. Events and traditions hold out their subtle suggestions. Contemporary knowledge and realities are too unsatisfactory and fill the mind with the eager longing for the unknown and the unconquered. The air is thick with the fragrance of wistful expectation. *All these are as it were the broken outlines of a hovering revelation.* Then the eager soul speeds on the wings of inspiration, flits into the bosom of God and finds itself bathed in the glory of the eternal vision. We may well imagine that such an event prefaced the revelation of the Christ on earth. Contemporary events, hopes and fears and accumulated traditions, all hinted at this truth at the back of them and were tense with the approaching revelation. The Christ was already reflected and pre-figured in the events and minds of men and dimly perceivable even as the mother feels the growing child in her womb. The eternal was becoming the temporal. Then one, filled with the agony and hope of the whole race, sought for and was vouchsafed the vision of the Christ and his *lilâ* ; and he saw the broken made whole, the dim clear and the vague real.

Who can measure the steps of the Eternal as he reveals himself through time? Here one, there another, with a gap of perhaps centuries between,—thus he leaves his footprints on the pathway of time, dimly and unperceived. Thus they grow and grow till at last they burst forth in their full significance in the superconscious perception of a fortunate soul. This is how the temporal and the eternal are inter-related. Sometimes the revelations are made absolutely on the spiritual plane, as in the instance of Christ. The Christ perhaps never lived as a man, but revealed himself to a pure heart in the depths of ecstasy. At other times, they have a historical counterpart, as in the instance of Rama or Krishna. But the fulness of these realities and truths was never on the plane of the sensible, but always on the plane of the supersensible. Therefore the problems of the historian have never signified anything to the devotees. Are there not hosts of

saints and sages to bear witness to the truth of their reality? Enough if I can see myself and my universe melt into the eternal light and love of my Beloved. Who cares for the disquisitions of the learned?

And who can better steal the heart of man than the Beloved cowherd? Of him it has been said that other Incarnations are but parts of the Lord, whereas Krishna is the Lord himself. It is through the heart that man is related to the world, men and God. These yearnings of the heart, the love-relations, can be subsumed under five heads, generally termed in the *Bhakti-Shâstras* as the *Pancha-bhâvas*, viz., *Shānta* (peaceful love), *Dâsya* (service), *Sakhya* (friendship), *Vâtsalya* (parental affection) and *Madhura* (Sweetest i.e. conjugal love). It is considered that all love-emotions of whatever shade or degree, must fall under one or another of these five root-emotions. And every man according to his temperament realises God as the perfection and fulfilment of one of these root-emotions. From this it follows that so far as humanity is concerned, the Personal God is the perfection of these five love-ideals. This provides a standard wherewith to judge the relative greatness of his incarnations. We may say one representing a greater number of these perfections is superior to the others. From this point of view, Sri Krishna is decidedly the greatest incarnation of God. In Christ is represented the ideals of *Shānta* and *Dâsya*. In Rama, *Shānta*, *Dâsya*, *Sakhya* and *Vâtsalya*. But in Krishna, all the five are manifested fully. The world has seen the greatest expression of love in and through him. He is the beloved Ideal of men as well as women, of children as well as grown-up men. The versatility of his character is marvellous. "He is the most wonderful Sannyasin and the most wonderful householder in one ; he had the most wonderful amount of *Rājasa* power and was at the same time living in the midst of the most wonderful renunciation." He was the perfect embodiment of his own teachings in the Gita. All the four *Yogas* find their culmination in him. A great philosopher and religious teacher, a mighty hero and statesman, a

powerful leader of hosts and maker of kings,—he was yet the beloved of the unsophisticated cowherds of Brindavan. How wonderful is *Gopilā* ! This is the very crown of his transcendental glory. "The purest love is only in Brindavan, and none else than the *Gopas* and the *Gopis* know it." Aye, theirs was the true love. Our love is always tinged with the consciousness of the power and fear of God. There is always an element of self-consciousness in it. But the *Gopis* know nothing of the power of majesty of Krishna. "The only thing they cared to understand of Krishna was that he was Infinite Love, that was all." "I do not want wealth, nor many people, nor do I want learning ; no, not even do I want to go to heaven. Let me be born again and again, but Lord, grant me this, that I may have love for thee, and that for love's sake." Such indeed was their love for him. "Who can understand the throes of love of the *Gopis*—the very ideal of love, love that wants nothing, love that does not care for anything in this world, or the world to come? .....They hated every adjective that was applied to Krishna ; they did not care to know that he was the Lord of creation, they did not care to know that he was almighty, they did not care to know that he was omnipotent..... Even the Gita, the great philosophy of religion, has nothing in it to compare with that ecstatic madness of love."

Aye, that is the one goal for the human soul, that infinite ocean of love in which it must lose itself for ever. Even now the flute is playing its ravishing strains. Still your heart, the flute will madden you by its song. Even now by the blue stream of the Jamuna, he stands illuminating the fragrant groves by his divine effulgence. Clarify your vision, that world will open before you. For verily, our own heart is the eternal Brindavan, and he the eternal shepherd playing in it his soul-ravishing strains. May he, the Full Moon of Gokool, graciously grant us his soul-emancipating vision !

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## YOU ASK ME WHY . . .

By NINA MACDONALD.

You ask me why mine eyes are glad.  
With joyful heart I tell you.

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Listen—

I go keep a tryst with my Beloved.  
Each morn when Dawn comes softly winging o'er the  
world ;  
When birds from nest and leafy bower  
With gladsome carols greet the new-born light ;  
When comes the soft awakening of grass and flower  
and tree . . .  
'Tis then I rise and swiftly go to keep sweet tryst with  
Him—my Lord.  
And when Day has drawn the veil of evening close, and  
softly gone to rest ;  
When Night—the merciful, the beneficent one—takes the  
tired world in her embrace  
And, over cares and joys alike draws her soft, enfolding  
mantle, sleep, . . .  
Then again do I come treading gently, reverently, the  
path that leads to joy—and . . . Him.

\*

Where is He?

Oh, very, very near and yet . . so far.  
To win to Him I must leave all.  
All thought of self must fall away ;  
All outward forms be lost to view.  
Where I keep my tryst with Him  
There shines no sun, nor moon, nor stars ;  
Naught save glowing, opalescent darkness and sound  
made visible.  
No earthly sound of mirth or strife is heard.



His name—the name of my Beloved—  
Rolls resonant in deep and endless waves.



And is He fair, you ask?  
Never was poet's dream so fair as He.  
He is the perfume of the sweetest flowers,  
Serenity of snow-clad mountains high,  
Splendor of noonday sun,  
Softness of starbeams on moonless night,  
Sparkle of wave, murmur of forest rill and calm of summer  
seas.  
His is all beauty that has been, that is, or that will be.



Ah yes, mine eyes are glad—for all day long my heart  
doth sing its one sweet song:  
A tryst have I—a tryst, O my Soul!—to keep with my  
Beloved.



## LESSONS OF THE PABNA RIOTS

BY SWAMI ASHOKANANDA

### I

It has pleased Providence to hold before us again the woeful spectacle of the extremely amorphous and helpless condition of the Hindu society in the horrors of the Pabna communal riots. Pabna is a district of the north Bengal with a district town of the same name. In that town in the morning of the 1st July were discovered five mutilated images of gods and goddesses near the house of a prominent citizen. This marked the beginning of the trouble. The sad spectacle drew hundreds of Hindu spectators throughout the day, and it was decided that these broken images together with other unprotected images in the town would be taken in procession and

immersed in the river. Accordingly a procession started at 6 p.m., which swelled to several thousands and by 7 it reached the bazar. There behind the rows of shops is a shed in which some Muhammadans were then saying their prayers. When the procession approached its vicinity, some of them came to protest ; a fracas took place resulting in personal injuries on both sides. The police fortunately intervened ; the procession went its way, immersed the images in the river, and terminated at about 7-30 p.m.

But the news of the collision spread into the villages and it is said that by 9 p.m. several thousand Mussalmans advanced from the neighbouring villages and poured into the town ; and mob-rule prevailed for two days thereafter during which the Hindus lived in terror within doors, and stray cases of assault on Hindus took place. The Commissioner and the Deputy Inspector-General of Police arrived at Pabna with reinforcements on July 3. Since then, it may be said, normal conditions have prevailed in the town.

But the rioting in the town was nothing compared to what happened in the villages. The rumours spread all over the district of the desecration of a mosque by the Hindus, and the Muhammadans who form a preponderant majority of the village populations, burst into fanatical flames, and all the horrors of hell were let loose on the Hindu minorities of the villages. Fanatical Mussalmans marched from village to village and town to town preaching assault on Hindus' person and property. From the 4th July attacks commenced and continued unceasing till the 8th when firm action by the authorities in sending reinforcements, arresting rowdy elements and resorting to fire began to have a quietening effect. But what happened in the meantime were ghastly in details. Markets were looted. Hindu homes were plundered and destroyed. Forcible conversion was resorted to. And men, women and children had to fly from their homes and take shelter for two or three days in forests infested by snakes, wild boars and tigers. Want of space forbids us to go into

details. But so grim and pathetic are they that it is almost unthinkable that such horrors could be perpetrated by neighbours on neighbours and that under a capable Government. Wealthy householders were made absolute paupers in a few hours. When they returned to their pillaged homes, in some cases they had not even a cup left to drink water from. In certain instances, respectable men were dragged to Mullahs and forced to dress like Muhammadans and repeat the *kalma* and even their womenfolk were constrained to embrace Islam. There has been communalism in Bengal before, but never such a ghastly expression of it.

## II

We would fain have overlooked these unhappy incidents as a passing frenzy and an unpremeditated outburst. We would have deplored but not saddened ourselves over them and raked up their fading memories. But they are not mere incidents. They are symbolic of hidden realities. The Pabna riots reveal the precarious conditions of the Hindu society in India, its weaknesses and impending dangers which, if they are not early remedied and averted, may lead to awful catastrophes.

Certain conclusions are irresistibly forced on us. The Hindus have not given a good account of themselves in this affair. They have shown lack of physical courage. Better they had died in defence of their home and honour than submit to the humiliations of flight and conversion. It is interesting to imagine what Muhammadans would have done in identical situations—they surely would have offered a stouter resistance. The difference is largely owing to physical debility of the Hindus as also to moral anæmia, augmented and often caused by physical weakness itself.

This timidity is not all to be laid at the door of the individuals concerned. Even an Englishwoman under extremely dangerous conditions feels herself buoyed up by the knowledge that the support of the entire nation is

behind her back. And even her deadliest enemy will not dare to raise his hand against her. Could our brethren when thus risked feel that whatever happened they had the whole Hindu India behind them, would they not have gladly laid their lives on the thresholds of their homes before they left them to be pillaged and desecrated? But to our shame that material and moral support is lamentably lacking. The reason of it is not so superficial as cowardice as is sometimes thought. For various causes, religious, social and political, we simply have not learnt to think of ourselves as a united people. It is true that in the later stages of the Pabna riots we have shown some signs of redemption and partial sympathy for the sufferers, which is bound to have a salutary effect on the community in general. But if sympathy had been shown earlier and more conspicuously, communal ill-feeling would not have assumed such vast proportions. As it was, our apathy indirectly encouraged the rowdies and bullies. Day by day, the press has reported shameful assaults on Hindu women made almost wholly by Muhammadans. But excepting the quite inadequate attempts of the *Nâri-rakṣhâ Samiti*, what has the Hindu society done to redress them?

We now feel that such prolonged neglect of responsibilities has brought the society to the verge of imminent ruin. It is said that fifty years ago Hindus constituted half the entire population of the Pabna district. The ratio now of them and Muhammadans is two to eleven. In most villages, the Hindus are in a hopeless minority. Even these few are slowly decaying and dying out. Statistics show that the growth of the Muhammadan population is as rapid as the decay of the Hindus. Various reasons have been given in explanation. The most obvious is the social. The extreme rigours of the Hindu social laws tend to decrease population. There are first of all the widows. Muhammadans have not that handicap. There are the narrow limitations of marriage-alliance. This tends to debilitate us physically. Muhammadans are free of these limitations. Then the child-mortality is certainly

higher among the Hindus. Social strictness has its other evils. It not only disintegrates society, but is also extremely cruel in application. Where we are unable to protect and defend, we are ruthless in punishment. The wonderful fraternity and catholicity of the Muhammadans are in striking contrast to this. Add to these the economic poverty of the Hindus who with their costly ceremonials and conventions can scarcely feel buoyant and bold. Combined with these social and economic causes, there is also the fact of the continuous political subjection of the Hindus, which has made them extra-submissive and hyper-metaphysical. In this respect also, the Muhammadans carry a lighter burden.

But a more important cause of our decadence is our religious disintegration. Not only has religion which is the essence and the foundation of the Hindu society, disappeared into meaningless and often harmful formal intricacies, but being divided into innumerable conflicting factions, it is no longer a cementing and invigorating factor in the national life. The remedy of this does not however lie in reviving the individual sects. For even were it done, they would not serve to strengthen and unify the Hindu community. It is a fact that those sects and creeds that have simple articles of faith and a paucity of ceremonialism are generally of stronger and more enduring fibres, and manifest extraordinary social cohesiveness. Witness, for example, the Muhammadans and the Sikhs. Too much addiction to ceremonialism and nicety of doctrines render the mind narrow, weak and hyper-sensitive, impair open-hearted manhood and sinewy masculinity. The Pauranic creeds belong mostly to this category. It is true they are rich in spiritual experience and subtle play of feeling, and in these respects perhaps go ahead of the calm realisations of the Vedanta. But they, alas, abound in weakening practices, intricate rites and ceremonies of bewildering varieties, circuitous philosophies and unhealthy social implications. Therefore, though traceable in their ultimate philosophy to the Vedanta or the Upanishads, in actual practice, spirit and

outlook, they are far removed from the life-giving and invigorating teachings of the Vedanta. Century after century, we have indulged in the weak emotionalism of the Puranas, till by now we are reduced to a kind of jelly-fish existence. On the other hand, the robust monotheism of the Muhammadans allied with a wonderful practical Vedantism of equality, fraternity and liberty runs directly counter to the corrosive intricacies of the Pauranic religions. What wonder then that the Hindus should go down before the powerful growth of the Muhammadans?

But the greatest reason perhaps of this slow death is the loss of our international function which has resulted in a general waste and disintegration of the social life. We are unconscious of the great purpose for which the Hindu nation has lived through milleniums,—the duty of Aryanisation i.e. the spiritualisation of the motives and ideals of other races and nations. This is the great task which Providence has set to the Hindu race, and by its fulfilment it has risen to glory and prosperity from age to age. As with a man so with a people. An aimless existence is slow mortification. A noble purpose calls forth all the latent powers which otherwise are wasted and frittered away. We have now no aim as a nation and are lost in oblivion with consequent stagnation and disruption of the corporate life. We cannot therefore call forth whatever power we have when occasions require, and are at the mercy of circumstances. Muhammadans, on the other hand, with their Pan-Islamic consciousness are still purposive in their collective actions. The moral is obvious.

Of all these the Pabna riots are an indication and a warning.

### III

These, however, do not explain the root-cause of the communal *quarrel*. The Hindu society may be weak and defective, but why should it therefore earn the antipathy of the Muhammadans? This surely cannot be due to

mere difference in beliefs and customs, for points of unity are not difficult to discover. Nor is the Semitic aggressiveness inherent in Islam so rampant in India, its Indian votaries being largely converts from Hinduism and the harmonising atmosphere of India having already exercised a profound influence on it. There must be some other deep-seated cause which has kept them separate and occasionally set them by the ear. Some have suggested that there is no real ill-feeling, the whole thing being *inspired* by interested parties. This explanation confuses a symptom for the disease. For without a pre-existing animosity, no party could ever take advantage of it. The smouldering fire was there, they simply fanned it to flames and threw in a fagot now and then to make it blaze more fearfully. We are therefore of opinion that the antipathy is real and of long duration. What is it then?

India was just emerging from the chaos of the decadent Buddhism and reconstituting her social corporation when the hordes of Muhammadan invaders overran Northern India. Buddhism by its wonderful liberality had invited innumerable races of questionable culture and religious belief into the fold of the Mother-Church, causing thereby an almost complete collapse of the social structure. While reorganising it, therefore, on the ancient caste basis, the fathers of the society had to be very careful in admitting and formulating this chaotic population. A large number remained outside the pale of the new society and in its shadowy borders. Such was the critical time when Muhammadans invaded India, and all these unreclaimed people were easily converted to the aggressive faith. Their children form to-day the bulk of the Muhammadan population in India. Now, it was natural that those converts already looked down upon by the high castes of the Hindu society should now be doubly hated. They also, as often happens with renegades, entertained no charitable feelings towards their former co-religionists. That ancient quarrel was never made up by mutual assimilation and has been handed through

centuries down to the present generation. This historical antipathy is, we think, mainly at the bottom of the present communal outbursts.

Along with it there is also the further reason that Hinduism has not yet succeeded in shaking off the defensive attitude assumed on the first invasion of India by Muhammadans. For then in those unsettled social conditions, it could not help raising protective walls of prohibitive customs against the onrush of the manifestly inferior and unknown civilisation of the new-comers. That attitude the Hindus have not yet abrogated.

Besides these, there is also a political reason. Several centuries of autocratic rule is too strong a memory to be effaced in a century or two. Muhammadans belong to a fraternity who are proud to have ruled over kingdoms extending from the shores of Spain to the Malay Archipelago. Therefore the prospects of self-government have revived in their bosom the sleeping desire of again having a dominant political position in the country. Long political subjection as well as their synthetic culture and catholicity of spirit have made the Hindus much saner politically. Democratic ideas are more agreeable to them than to the Muhammadans. This explains the bitter political quarrels, the extravagant claims and the intransigent attitude of the Muhammadans.

#### IV

If our diagnosis is correct, then the remedies will not be hard to find. What we shall suggest follow naturally from it. Our suggestions are mainly for the internal adjustment of the Hindu society. We believe that the solution of the Hindu-Moslem problem lies with the Hindus in their reforming themselves into a mighty, spiritually aggressive, and assimilative body. To that end, certain sharp changes in the present outlook and behaviour are absolutely necessary. From this will follow naturally a tremendous change in its international relations. That "don't-touchism" which is the bane of the



Hindu society must be shunned also in inter-communal and international relations. Hindus indeed must no longer shut off Muhammadans (and also of course other communities) from common social relationships. But we know this change can be brought about only indirectly by an internal adjustment. Hence to reconstruct the Hindu society is not only to strengthen and save it, but also to prepare the grounds for the real national unity of India.

The first thing to be done is to adopt certain measures to put an immediate stop to the mischiefs of the rowdies. We must offer physical resistance. We must bring it home to them that they cannot any more insult us with impunity. No offensive aggression or ruthless retaliation however, but stout and steady resistance to Muhammadan offensive (be it an attack on womanhood, on religion or civic rights) even unto death. You can no more win them over by sweet reasonableness and self-surrender than check the depredations of a tiger by pious sermons. When fanaticism overpowers man, he loses his head and the sleeping tiger in him wakes up with its ancient thirst for blood and death. The wisest course then is to offer resistance, "to face the brute" in the words of Swami Vivekananda. But mind, only *resistance*, not aggression. Never must a Hindu raise his hand against any one except in self-defence. For self-defence is human, but wanton aggression is beastly. It may be this spirit of resistance will not be evoked in a day, but it is also true that without it there will be no end to our suffering. What cowardice has begotten, courage alone can destroy.

But we have seen that this spirit of resistance cannot be born without the moral support of the entire and united Hindu community. How to unify the society is therefore the next important problem. We have seen that certain disintegrating forces, social and religious, underlie the present decadence. As regards the social problems we suggest after Swami Vivekananda that as a preliminary measure, the various sub-castes should be merged into the four cardinal castes. The sub-castes are separated from each other by conventions and traditions the most

important of which are those relating to dining and matrimony. These barriers of customs were originally intended as checks against intermixture and adulteration and consequent degradation of culture through race-fusion. In fact, when culture was not evenly distributed among the different sections, such checks were a necessity. But such inequality is almost neutralised now. Interdining and intermarriage may therefore be freely allowed among the members of the same caste. This will result in enrichment of blood, physical improvement as well as greater social cohesion. Another suggestion is that all so-called low classes be raised to the status of the high class Sudras and allowed like them 'to touch the Brahman's water,' and other allied social and religious privileges. Swami Vivekananda is said to have suggested to the late Aswini Kumar Datta of Barisal that they should all be invested with 'the sacred thread.' We do not know whether we can expect so much of our co-religionists just now. But the little we have asked for, is that also excessive? If we welcome them into the respect and solicitude of the society, they may yet prove the mightiest bulwark against wanton aggressions from outside.

But it is vain to ask for social reform without inaugurating a simultaneous religious reform. All great social upheavals resulted in the past from previous spiritual upheavals. The greatest need of the time is therefore a great spiritual revolution. We have seen along what lines the changes should be introduced. The Pauranik creeds must be thoroughly permeated and transformed by the ancient religion of the Upanishads. The call of the age is for a return to their invigorating, and simple and unifying ideals, pointing ever to the infiniteness of the power and glory of the soul and its divine invincibility. All our creeds theoretically and philosophically owe allegiance to them. Now there must be a fuller and open recognition of the Vedantic doctrines and carrying them into practice. A new life then will awaken within us, a new vigour and hope, and a wonderful desire for united feeling and action in mutual love

and service. The immediate effect of this change of religious outlook will be that all narrownesses and limitations will vanish like darkness before the invading rays of the rising sun, and the mind of the nation, withdrawn from trifles, will be fixed on the broader issues of life and its nobler heights. Social reform will follow automatically.

And with that shall return the lost purposiveness of our national life,—the noble motive of the Aryanisation of humanity. We have seen how the lack of this has made it stagnant and wasteful. Swami Vivekananda used to call this India's foreign policy, and through its functioning alone, he believed, the scattered forces of the nation can be united. When therefore it will be realised and made active, the whole nation will rise up as one man in fulfilment of its great task, and the performances of the Buddhistic age will be re-enacted in a grander scale. New races and cultures will come and be absorbed into the Mother-Church and thus will be laid the foundation on which alone the mighty edifice of the Indian nationhood can be erected. We believe that religion is the only possible basis of Indian unity. That religion is not merely an alliance of creeds but a many-phased organic unity. Salvation of the Hindu community is thus the salvation of the Indian nation.

## THE MODERN REVIEW AND SWAMI

### VIVEKANANDA

BY PRINCIPAL KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

In the August number of the current year's *Modern Review* there are two notices of Swami Vivekananda—one from a reviewer\* and the other from the editor for the readers to decide. Says the reviewer :

"Swami Vivekananda is one of the glorious band of torch-bearers of Indian religion and culture to the

far western countries. His thoughts have captured the thinking minds nearly all over the world." (p. 192)

Says the editor :

"The little interest that Swami Vivekananda's popular lectures had aroused in America soon vanished ; and as his treatment of Indian Philosophy was never intended to be scholarly, his lectures failed to satisfy the scholarly interest of the philosophers of the West and did in a way more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy in the estimation of scholars and Philosophers." (pp. 235-236).

If the reviewer is right, the editor must be wrong. I think the editor is wrong beyond all justification. What prompted the editor to make the indiscreet remark God only knows, but to belittle Vivekananda who has left his impress upon history with a single stamp of his foot—Vivekananda, the idol of the nation, the only true representative of Hindu culture that ever went to the West, is an attempt which is extremely ludicrous in its unreasonableness. It is as true to say that the sun is not bright as to say that Vivekananda did harm to the cause of our philosophy.

The editor says in the first place that "the little interest that Swami Vivekananda's popular lectures had aroused in America soon vanished." Is that the verdict of history? To prove the incorrectness of the statement, to put it mildly, I shall have to quote the opinions of the great scholars, philosophers and *savants* of the West together with extracts from the leading papers of England and America, but that is a task from which I naturally shrink, as these quotations will fill at least one whole number of the *Modern Review*. I can but refer the editor, if he cares to know, to Chapters LXXX, LXXXIII, LXXXIV and LXXXVII of the second volume and Chapters XC and XCII of the third volume of the monumental life of Swamiji by his Eastern and Western disciples published by the Mayavati Advaita Ashrama. That the work initiated by Swami Vivekananda is rapidly spreading and the interest of the

Americans daily increasing will appear from the fact that new Vedanta Ashramas are being constantly opened in different parts of America—a fact which can be verified by one glance at the latest report of the Ramakrishna Mission.

As for Swami's treatment of Indian philosophy, let me quote the words of the Swami himself from one of his letters :

"To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry Philosophy and intricate Mythology and queer startling Psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task which only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in every day life ; out of hopelessly intricate Mythology must come concrete moral forms ; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical Psychology—and all this must be put into a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work. The Lord only knows how far I shall succeed. To work alone we have the right, not to the fruits thereof. It is hard work, my boy, hard work !"

Any "philosophaster" may publish his dull lucubration and to parade his learning may quote like a parrot and draw up an array of technical jargon but a philosopher, in the true sense of the term, must have a vision, as Prof. William James has so well said, not a prophet's vision but still a vision ;—and as for Swami Vivekananda he was not only a philosopher but a great deal more, for he was a prophet and a philosopher rolled up in one. Those who have not read the Swami's works as a whole, those whose knowledge of the Swami is shallow, scrappy and fragmentary, may say that they find contradictions here and there, but let them study thoroughly all his speeches and writings and think for themselves and then they will see how wrong they are. The Swami was the most learned man I have ever seen but there was no ponderousness about him, no vulgar

pomposity of an academic upstart. His knowledge of all the classical systems of Indian philosophy and the philosophy of the West, ancient, mediæval and modern ; his knowledge of comparative religion, higher criticism, the historical, comparative and critical method ; his knowledge of the fundamental principles of Science and the history and literature of the world—in short, his knowledge as a whole was astonishingly wide and deep. His synthetic genius, lucid exposition and mode of presentment are matchless in the history of the world. In the words of the famous J. H. Wright, Professor of Greek in Harvard University, "here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together." Professor Wright had also said before the Swami became the hero of the Parliament of Religions : "To ask you, Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun to state its right to shine." Professor William James who may be regarded as the leader of the modern movement in Western philosophy has given the following estimate of Swami Vivekananda in his famous book entitled *Pragmatism* : "The paragon of all monistic systems is the Vedanta philosophy of Hindostan and the paragon of Vedantist missionaries was the late Swami Vivekananda who visited our land some years ago." Both Prof. Deussen and Prof. Max Müller were his ardent admirers. His lectures at the Harvard University, at Oxford and in London were highly appreciated by all scholars. "Nicolas Tesla, the famous scientist, after hearing the Swami's exposition of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, admitted the superiority of its cosmogony and of its rational theories of Kalpas (Cycles), Prāṇa and Akāsha, to which, Mr. Tesla said, modern science might well look for the solution of cosmological problems and which he assured the Swami he could prove even mathematically." The Swami's lecture on the philosophy of the Vedanta in the Harvard University produced such an impression on the minds of the professors that he was offered a Chair of Eastern philosophy in that famous seat of learning. But he

could not accept this as he was a Sannyasin. Space will not permit me to quote the extremely eulogistic opinion of the Rev. C. C. Everett, D.D., L.L.D. of Harvard University as the opinion is lengthy. But why multiply examples? Was not the Parliament of Religions at Chicago itself a galaxy of the most learned scholars, philosophers and divines? As for the impression left by Swami Vivekananda in England, let me quote but one opinion—the opinion of Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal who cannot be charged with undue partiality to the achievement of the Swami. He wrote thus from London to the *Indian Mirror* of the 15th February, 1898:

“Some people in India think that very little fruit has come of the lectures that Swami Vivekananda delivered in England and that his friends and admirers exaggerate his work. But on coming here I see that he has exerted a marked influence everywhere. In many parts of England I have met with men who deeply regard and venerate Vivekananda. Though I do not belong to his sect, and though it is true that I have differences of opinion with him, I must say that Vivekananda has opened the eyes of a great many here and broadened their hearts. Owing to his teaching most people here now believe firmly that wonderful spiritual truths lie hidden in the ancient Hindu Scriptures. Not only has he brought about this feeling, but he has succeeded in establishing a golden relation between England and India. From what I quoted on ‘Vivekanandism’ from *The Dead Pulpit* by Mr. Haweis, you have clearly understood that, owing to the spread of Vivekananda’s doctrines, many hundreds of people have seceded from Christianity.”

I have quoted only an infinitesimal fraction of the high opinions expressed by the great scholars of the West on the message and work of Swami Vivekananda. The quotations make it abundantly clear that the statement of the editor of the *Modern Review* is *not* true, for the Swami *did* satisfy the scholarly interest of the philosophers of the West and has done more good to

the cause of Indian philosophy in the estimation of scholars and philosophers than the editor of the *Modern Review* can ever imagine.

It is true that the great Swami did not leave a systematised statement of his philosophy in book form, though his *Raja-Yoga* finds a place in Trübner's Oriental Series. But that is because he had no time for the undertaking. From one of his letters we know that he was seriously thinking of "writing something big on the Vedanta Philosophy," and that he was "busy collecting passages from the various Vedas bearing on the Vedanta in its three-fold aspect." But "various other matters demanded his time and attention. Besides numerous private interviews, many classes a week and constant writing and public lecturing, he was planning his work in India and giving instructions for the work to his Indian disciples and *guru-bhais*. Thus he was unable to fulfil his long-cherished desire." He burnt the candle of his life at both ends and it burnt out soon. Why do not our arm-chair professors of philosophy express their gratitude to the Swami by expounding and interpreting his philosophy in a systematised form? Perhaps they are too proud for that. Besides what earthly good can they expect from a Sannyasin who is not even in the land of living? And, after all, is "system" so great a thing that we should make a fetish of it? System-mongers are not necessarily the greatest philosophers of the world. Neither Plato nor Kant can be said to have built up what is called a "system" now-a-days. Even Shankara's Commentaries and his various other works cannot be called a "system" in the modern sense of the term.

There was a time when in the Calcutta University there was a scholar of the calibre of Dr. Preonath Sen who concluded his thesis on the Vedanta which won for him the Premchand Roychand Studentship, by quoting Swami Vivekananda and expressing his gratitude for the services done by the Swami to the cause of our philosophy. Time was when beneath the pene-



trating gaze of the critical scholarship of Principal N. N. Ghosh who had not even a Bachelor's degree to bless his soul, all our academic bigwigs literally quailed. His admiration of the Swami was deep and sincere and when a malicious attack was made on the Swami's famous Townhall speech at Calcutta, he said in his *Indian Nation* that "the Swami was discriminate in the choice of the audience before whom he had to exhibit his pearls." Time was when the Calcutta University could boast of a Mahamahopadhyay Pundit Chandrakanta Tarkalankar. There was no plethora of "doctors" then—no log-rolling cliques or coteries, no shameless self-advertisement, no contemptible snobbery, no intolerable humbug, no unholy alliance between Hegelianism and Vedanta. Even now there is a gentleman who understands *Adwaita-Vâda* and who is a sound scholar, but he is so shy and retiring that very few hear his name. He is a college professor and has not yet been honoured with a doctorate. He is not a cork and so he does not float. Nobody dives deep to find him out. *O tempora! O mores! Philosophy! Divine Philosophy!* What things are not done in thy name!

## SOME ARGUMENTS OF BAUDDHA PHILOSOPHY.

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA.

There are four main schools of Bauddha Philosophy, all of which are based on the single utterance of Lord Buddha: "All is momentary; all is pain; all is like itself alone; all is void." The first three points are accepted by all the schools. The Bauddhas regard the world as impermanent, as full of misery and misery alone. According to them all objects are momentary as well as "self-characterised," in other words, each is like itself alone, a comparison being absurd since there is no common characteristic between them.

On the fourth point, that is, as regards the universal void, the Bauddhas are divided. This doctrine is accepted only by the Mâdhyamikas. They hold like the Mâyavâdins that the world is an illusion. There is neither existence, destruction, birth, death or Nirvana. What is seen in the dream state is not seen in the awakened state and vice versa. In *Sushupti* there is nothing whatsoever. From this they conclude that no object is real, for if it were, it would have been cognized in all the states. Therefore they say that the ultimate principle is a void which is free from the four alternatives, reality, unreality, both reality and unreality, and neither reality nor unreality. If the first is accepted, it would show, e.g., that the activity of a potter is useless, for the pot is already existing. If the second is accepted, then also the activity of the potter is useless for it cannot produce a thing that does not exist. The last two they leave off as self-contradictory. Neither do they acknowledge the doctrine of partial existence ; for if a part is unreal, then the whole of it must be unreal. When according to these our points all ideas come to an end, a void will result. This universal void is a truth that can be realised by discrimination which will prove the momentary nature of things and the illusory nature of the senses, universality and reality.

To this it may be said that even recognising a void we have to accept an Atman who is the witness of this void, otherwise due to want of proof the void cannot be accepted. Even if it be said that like Brahman the void is eternal and self-luminous, it is only recognising the Brahman under a different name. Moreover the Nihilists regard the world as only an illusion, and so they have to accept a basis (अधिष्ठान) on which it takes place ; for what is illusion but the false knowledge of a real thing? So without a basis there can be no illusion, and void cannot be such a basis. Well, granting a Brahman, what about the external world? Is it real or unreal? The Vedantin replies that the world has a reality. For we see things, feel them and can use them. How then can we say that they have no reality? But he says that this

reality is only relative (व्यवहारिक). From the Absolute (पारमार्थिक) standpoint they have no reality. How to define them? The Vedantin therefore says that the world is neither real nor unreal. It is unspeakable (अनिर्वचनीयः) This is Sankara's philosophy which has earned him the name of प्रच्छन्नबोध or a Bauddha in disguise.

Next come the Yogâchâras who do not recognise the existence of any thing except self-subsistent cognition. According to them the act of knowledge, the object of knowledge and the result of knowledge are wholly an internal affair. "The idea of the thing is the object ; cognition so far as it is consciousness is the result of knowledge ; the cognition in so far as it is power is Manas, knowledge ; in so far as it is the abode of that power it is Pramâtri, knowing subject." It is like a river continually flowing. Vast masses of water always change places, yet we call it the same river. What is the river really? It is the series of changes. We take up the whole thing and call it the river. Similar is the case with the mind,—pure cognitions—a series of sensations, perceptions, ideas, without any substantial basis. This is the doctrine of the Yogâchâras which is better known as Kshanika Vijnânâvâda. According to them the supreme goal of man is the realisation of contentless abstract thought.

The Yogâchâras therefore do not recognise any external objects. They deny their existence in this way : Does the external object arise from entity or not? You cannot say it arises from an entity, for in that case being created it cannot have a permanent existence. If it arises from a non-entity, it can never come into existence, for that which is not created cannot have any existence. Whatever exists must come from a previous existence. Moreover, if mere cognition has to arise from some external object, then how do we get the knowledge of an object seen before? The cognition is produced, and if according to this principle we have to accept the cognition of the object also, we are led to a contradiction, viz., a present cognition of a past object. Moreover, during a

dream the ideas present in our minds appear as subject and object ; so we can infer that the ideas which occur in our waking state are similarly mere ideas without any corresponding external objects. But whence do we get the variety of ideas if there are no external objects? From the impressions left by the infinite series of ideas which preceded the present ideas. In this eternal creation ideas and mental impressions follow each other as causes and effects, and this accounts for the variety of ideas.

Moreover, we are always conscious of the act of knowledge and the object of knowledge at one and the same time. Therefore the two are identical. When we are conscious of the one we are conscious of the other, and this would not happen unless they are identical. Cognition and cognised objects are really one and continuous. The external object is only a bundle of sensations, and perception is only a higher and further stage of the same. In other words, intellect has no other object except itself. There is no object of perception different from the perceiving intellect. If we consider them as different, we are landed on a difficulty. For between the intellect and a material world quite different from it, no connection can arise, and hence there can be no perception, for perception is nothing but the connection between the two. This is the main difficulty of a dualistic hypothesis.

In the West also philosophers who followed Descartes experienced the same difficulty. Descartes regards God as a substance which has an independent existence, *i.e.*, has the ground of his existence in himself, he is the cause of himself. Mind and matter are to him two created substances, *i.e.*, they depend for their existence on God. The properties of these two substances are not only different but negate each other. This being the case, the union between the two can only be a mechanical one, through the intervention of Divine assistance. Thus the ego becomes aware of the existence of matter only through an act of God. Similarly the volitions of the

soul act on the body through the intervention of God. Spinoza, however, regarded mind and matter not as substances but as attributes of the one substance, God. In other respects as between themselves, they negate each other and one cannot act on the other. But as referred to God both of them are one and the same. One and the same substance is present in each attribute. Thus the idea of a circle and an actual circle are not different. As thought it is an idea, and as matter it is a circle. All things are products of the one substance with these two attributes which are inseparable. Thus spirit and matter exist as an inseparable unity, and the difficulty of Descartes is solved. But yet we have to remember that the influence of the one on the other does not exist. They are one in the Divine substance but not in themselves as they are. But can we call such a unity a real one? Thus with Spinoza too spirit and matter stand separated from each other for all practical purposes. Real unity can be established only by denying their different natures and explaining the one by the other, mind by matter and matter by mind. The latter method was employed by Leibnitz, Berkeley and Fichte. Leibnitz establishes the identity or perfect unity of the soul and the body on the theory of pre-established harmony. Idealism in him is not yet perfect. Though material objects, space etc. are mere phenomena according to him, yet the material world is not absolutely denied by him. It was Berkeley who first denied its existence. In him idealism reached its perfection. According to him our sensations are subjective. When we feel or see external objects it is a mere error. They are actually our sensations, perceptions themselves. So what are called things, exist only in our mind. For, how could material things produce sensations and perceptions so different from their nature? Hence according to him there exists no external object, but only spirit whose nature is made of conceptions and volitions—a result similar to that arrived at by the Vijnânavâdins with more or less the same strain of reasoning.

Let us now consider the doctrines of the Yogâchâras a little more critically. According to them the Vijnâna is the Atman, but they consider it as momentary and not eternal. There is no reality besides this and all objects are mere modes of this. The Vedantin regards this Vijnâna as the Atman but to him it is eternal. Evidently the Vijnânâvâdin has confounded Vijâna with Buddhi-vritti (modes of the mind-stuff) and had not an eye on the Self which manifests these modes due to its power and yet is different from them. He did not take into account that the mind-stuff being subtle and clear, the Self is reflected in it, and that due to the intelligence of the Atman the mind-stuff in which it is reflected appears also to be intelligent. Thus confounding and taking the modes of the mind to be transitory the Vijnânâvâdin has come to the conclusion that Vijnâna is momentary.

If Vijnâna is momentary, it has a beginning and therefore it is a product. Hence before it was created it was non-existing. Only such a thing which is non-existing could be created. An eternal thing cannot be said to be created. Now if Vijnâna was non-existing before it was created, then who was to experience its non-existence? In the absence of such an experience we cannot say that it was non-existing and consequently we cannot say it is momentary.

Moreover, if Vijnâna is not eternal, how is remembrance possible? Only what one experiences can one remember. If the experiences and memories are different, how is it possible to remember what another has experienced? If the same one exists till the moment of remembrance, then Vijnâna cannot be momentary. On the other hand it is common knowledge that the same knower persists in all different experiences. Thus when we say 'I who saw Benares am now seeing the Himalayas,' we recognise that the knower is one. We cannot even say that because the two knowers are alike, therefore such a recognition takes place. For similarity consists of three factors, the knowledge of 'this,' 'that' and 'likeness' as in 'This is like that'. In order that a

knowledge of these three factors may be had, the knower must exist at least for three moments, for such a knowledge cannot happen in one moment. If this is granted, then Vijnâna is not momentary. The recognition of the self-same knower cannot be due to the similarity of the two different knowers.

Coming to their doctrine which negates the external world, we find that it also cannot stand. The negation of the external world is based on the identity of the subject and object, which in its turn is based on the fact that the cognition of the subject and object is invariable and simultaneous. But then in the case of an illusion and hallucination, we have such invariable simultaneity but not identity. Moreover, if the object were identical with the ego or the perceiving intellect, we ought to experience it as such ; but as a matter of fact we experience it as something different from it. We never experience as 'I am a chair' but as 'I see a chair'. Nor can it be said that the idea appears as if it were something external due merely to illusion. For the very phrase 'as if external' shows that there must be something external in reality or else the phrase is paradoxical ; it is tantamount to saying that 'Devadatta is like the son of a barren woman.' Moreover, the illusion of duality is based by the Yogâchâras on the identity of subject and object ; and the identity of these two on the illusiveness of the duality ; this is manifestly an argument in a circle. In the cognition of a pot and a cloth the consciousness is the same but its attributes vary, which can only be due to the fact that the cloth and the pot are real external objects. Or else the consciousness being the same, the identity between it and all cognition would have reduced all objects to a non-difference. Moreover, as the consciousness always exists, the appearance of different forms of objects continually shows that those forms depend on things different from the consciousness ; for otherwise we would have had the same form continuously. The only rational explanation therefore is that external objects exist.

Accordingly the Sautrântikas and the Vaibhâshkas hold that an external world exists and that cognition takes external things for its objects, and it is not a mere internal modification. These objects impress their form on consciousness, thus giving it a definiteness. The external world has an independent existence and is not brought into existence only when it is cognised as the Yogâchâras say. The Sautrantikas, however, say that this existence is known only indirectly through inference, whereas the Vaibhâshikas say it is known by direct perception through the senses.

## REMEDIES FOR SNAKE-BITE

Nowhere else than in India does the number of deaths from snake-bite amounts to such a large figure. Newspapers and periodicals publish many advertisements of 'infallible' remedies for snake-bites, scorpion-stings etc. It is well-known that not all the praises sung over these remedies are found to be based on actual merit. Another difficulty is that these advertisements do not reach the poor and ignorant villagers who suffer most from such accidents. What we shall write here will not also reach the villagers, but as our remedies are very simple and universally available, absolutely free of cost, we would request our readers, out of purely humanitarian motives, to experiment with the remedies that we shall suggest on any cases of snake-bite etc. they might come across, and give as wide a publicity to them as possible, if their experiments prove successful.

Sometime back, news came to our Ashrama of a snake-bite in a neighbouring village. Immediately on the receipt of the news, two of the Swamis proceeded to the village and tried the following experiment. Fortunately, the villagers who knew (from instructions given to them on a previous occasion) that a tight bandage above the bitten spot would help in preventing the spread of the



poison, had taken this precaution. But as it was not taken early, the patient had become unconscious by the time the Swamis reached the place. They prepared some juice of Tulasi leaves (Basil plant, *L. Ocimum Album* or *O. Sanctum*) and also of the sheaths of a plantain stem. They rubbed the former on the top of the head, the forehead, the neck, the chest and the naval, and administered about half a tea-spoonful of the latter juice by the mouth every five or ten minutes. This remedy took effect after six or seven hours of continued application, so late, probably because the treatment commenced nearly eight hours after the snake-bite, which took place at nine in the morning. When consciousness was found slightly returning, another experiment was tried. They made a cross incision on the bitten spot. Next they took a chicken, made a similar cross incision on its anus and applied the incised anus of the chicken exactly on the bitten spot. Five such chickens were thus applied and died, one after another ; but when the sixth one was applied, it did not die and by that time the patient also regained consciousness, and an enema was given to her. The patient gradually recovered and was quite all right at the end of twenty-four hours.

The operations described above might perhaps appear to some as too full of complications. Lest the operation on the chicken should scare away any intending experimenter, we hasten to add that the application of the Tulasi juice and the application of the plantain juice *alone* have been seen to effect a complete cure. Perhaps the chicken treatment helps to eliminate the poison. In this connection we might make mention of other remedies which one of our Swamis has found successful elsewhere.

In the place of Tulasi juice the juice of the lotus-root (*Padma-Mrinal*) or of Rambas (रामर्वास), or aloe, and in the place of plantain juice the juice prepared out of the leaves of cotton plant are also used. But one thing to be remembered is that the juice of the lotus-root is applied only on the head. If none of these things is available, the Tulasi juice alone applied externally and given internally

has been found to give relief. Even when the case seems hopeless and all signs of life are disappearing, the juice of Tulasi alone rubbed all over the body has been found to revive the dying patient.

We cannot vouchsafe for the effectiveness of the other remedies, although the *Shaligram Nighantu* speaks of aloe and the lotus as destroyers of poison. By all accounts the Tulasi (which the *Nighantu* also describes as a 'killer of poison') seems to be the poison-destroyer par excellence. One of our Swamis here testifies to the wonderful efficacy he has observed in the juice of Tulasi in curing a severe type of scorpion-sting. The Tulasi plant is to be found in all parts of India, being worshipped in many a Hindu home as sacred, and it should be a very easy matter to extract the juice and experiment with it.

We shall feel obliged if our readers would take the trouble to inform us of the success of their experiments.

## NEWS AND NOTES

### REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A writer publishes his reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda in the July-August number of the Bengali monthly *Udbodhan*, in course of which he says that he put two questions to the Swamiji while he was staying in the house of Babu Mohini Mohun Das during his sojourn at Dacca in the March of 1901. The questions and the replies given by Swamiji were :

(1) Q. What is Karma? Does it mean only sacrifices and other rituals?

A. In this Kali Yuga, Charity is the only Karma. e. g. gift of knowledge, money, food, sustenance etc. Selflessness is the crucial test of greatness. The great ones never hate anybody.

Q. What is *Swadharma*?

A. This is a difficult question indeed. By *Swadharma* is meant the dharma (duties) either according

to one's innate nature, or according to one's caste. Astrology, when it determines the *varna* of a new-born child, does so in consideration of its inherent character. But Arjuna was asked in the Gita to do his duties in reference to his caste. In my opinion one's dharma or duties should be inferred from one's nature.

The writer was present in the two lectures that Swamiji delivered at Dacca on *What I have learnt* and *The Religion we are born in*. In course of the first lecture, the writer remembers the Swamiji to have said: "First, a human birth is necessary. Next, you should have a thirst for God and spirituality. This is admitted by all universally. Next point is peculiar to your religion, —you require a Maha-purusha—a Guru. He must be a *Brahma-vit*,—he must know God before he can make you know God, for the blind cannot lead the blind..... For the last 25 years, I have been a seeker of truth, but found only book-learning and pride of sect. At last it pleased God to join me with a Mahapurusha." He also remembers a few sentences of the second lecture: "Englishmen condemn idolatry—that is a long word and therefore must be bad. It is surely bad, the reason being—Englishmen call it so. However God-speed to these Englishmen, for they form a part of the economy of the Great Mother and they are fulfilling their mission."

He one day asked Swamiji to recount some of his unique experiences in America and Europe. Swamiji said that while in America, a heiress being attracted by his personality and great eloquence, once offered her vast fortune and herself to Swamiji "to help him in his mission of life." Swamiji thanked her heartily for this kind offer. But he said he was unable to accept it, being as he was a monk who had already dedicated his all, body, mind and soul to the one Lord of his life, Sri Ramakrishna. The writer says, this recital simply overwhelmed him. When he asked Swamiji the reason of the break-down of his health, he replied that it was that he had to work hard in America, being compelled to undertake long journeys to

deliver his lectures without any opportunity for proper recreation and leisure. Why did he not take care of his health which was so precious to humanity, was the next question put to him. "Then I had no thought of the body," came the reply.

The writer records one very fine incident, eloquent of Swamiji's extreme kindness and consideration. He had wanted of Swamiji to hear those songs from him which he used to sing to Sri Ramakrishna. One night a man went to the writer's house which was rather far from Swamiji's residence, and told him that Swamiji had sent for him as he was going to sing just then. When the writer went to Mohini Babu's house, he found a large assembly gathered there. Swamiji saw him from a distance and welcomed him with these Sanskrit words, "Come, come, O learned one!"

The writer also says that Swamiji told him that while he was passing through Serbia during his European travel, he met there some Hindu Marwari merchants who traded in Attar, Rose-water etc. and had gone there on land from India. They were extremely glad to see Swamiji.

The writer says that he at first did not believe in image-worship, looking upon it as a rank superstition, but that Swamiji's Chicago lectures thoroughly disabused his mind of that false notion.

#### PATANJALI: HIS TIME

One of the brightest luminaries shining in the spacious firmament of our ancient history is the great Patanjali. A great Yogi, endowed with a keen scientific mind, and author of the celebrated Yoga aphorisms, he was also the writer of the renowned Mahabhasya on Panini's grammar. A medical treatise also is sometimes ascribed to him. It is unfortunate however that little is known of such a master-mind. This historical poverty is at once sad and exasperating. Our ancient fathers seem to have played a huge joke on us by bequeathing themselves to us as simple intellectual forces with no

vestige of the frail humanity about them, for which our heart yearns.

Mr. Prabhat Ch. Chakravarti contributes an article to the *Indian Historical Quarterly* on Patanjali and tries to ascertain through internal and external evidences the date of his existence. The internal evidence he bases on Patanjali's Mahabhasya. "It is difficult," he writes, "to ascertain the time of Patanjali. He is evidently the last among the 'three sages' (Trimuni) whose names are prominently mentioned in connection with the Paniniyan school of Sanskrit grammar..... The following texts of the Mahabhasya have been considered and examined by both Indian and European scholars as what point to some positive data for determining the date of Patanjali. Under the rule Pan. 3. 2. 123 the Mahabhasya has cited by way of examples इह पुष्यमित्रं याजयामः and under the Vartika जित्पुष्यस्यैव राजाद्यर्थम् it has given two more instances, namely, पुष्यमित्रसभा and चन्द्रगुप्तसभा, which all tend to prove that Patanjali flourished during the reign of Pushyamitra, the founder of the Sunga dynasty..... A careful examination of the expression इह पुष्यमित्रं याजयामः will make it sufficiently clear that the performance of religious rites by Pushyamitra as referred to here was an event that undoubtedly took place during the life-time of Patanjali. Now, if these passages really refer to Pushyamitra and his royal council, as many eminent scholars have unhesitatingly given their verdict, we must be prepared to believe that Patanjali was a contemporary of Pushyamitra and that he could not be placed later than 150 B.C..... That he was in touch with a great ruling chief and had intimate knowledge of the royal court is clear from many passages of the Mahabhasya. Further evidence regarding the date of Patanjali is furnished by the texts अश्वघोषः सकेतम् and अश्वघोषो माध्यमिकम् which have been explained by distinguished scholars as an historical reference to a siege of Saketa (Oudh) and Madhyamika by the Greek King Menander. This is, so to speak, the internal evidence in regard to the time of Patanjali."

True, this is very meagre information about Patanjali. But it is by such slow and steady effort that we can fill up the great blank that our past history is to us. It is really a puzzle why our forefathers were so chary in leaving behind correct details of themselves and their times. One explanation seems possible. The cultural and traditional continuity which to ensure is the main use of history, was maintained amongst us by a strict and undisturbed preservation and continuance of *Acharya*. Through customs and conventions was handed down from generation to generation that great fund of knowledge and experience without which no generation can truly fulfil its national functions. This is, to our mind, the secret of the presence of a deep historical consciousness among Hindus in spite of their not having any chronicles properly so called. But times are changed and it is necessary that the ancient method of the continuance of *Acharya* should be supplemented by the new method of history.

#### THE FOURTH GENERAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION (1923-1924)

The Report has been lying on our table for some time past. The period under report witnessed the starting of a number of branch centres in urban as well as rural areas. The works of the Mission fall under three classes, viz. :— (1) Missionary work (preaching and publishing of literature), (2) Philanthropic work, (3) Educational work. Among the chief missionary centres we may mention the names of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur; the Ramakrishna Math, Bagh Bazar (Calcutta); the Ramakrishna Adwaita Ashrama, Benares; the Adwaita Ashrama, Mayavati; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Patna and Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay. The centres at Mayavati, Bagh Bazar and Madras publish books and monthly magazines. Lecturing tours were undertaken, during the period under review, from Belur, Mayavati and Madras centres. Some other centres also organised

classes and held public lectures on religious subjects in their respective areas. The Bombay Ashrama has been opened in 1923 and working satisfactorily, thus removing a great want in Western India. Another institution has been started in 1924 at Shella (Khasia Hills), Assam, which has been since doing educational and propaganda work among the backward hill tribes. During the years under review a large number of youngmen joined the Order. The Madras Math undertook in a grand scale a flood relief work in 1924 in the districts of Coimbatore, Salem, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Malabar and some other places in the Cochin and Travancore states. The work earned unstinted praise from the public as well as Government. The propaganda work of the Patna centre may be specially noted.

The foreign centres in New York, San Francisco and Boston have been gradually proving more and more useful. Two new monks were sent to assist the San Francisco and New York works. The Boston branch has founded a peace retreat named Ananda Ashrama in California. The Swamis in America besides holding regular classes in their local centres often undertook lecturing tours in different parts of the country. Swami Paramananda in charge of Boston work published a number of books and lectures during the period. He is also continuing the publication of his monthly organ. The Ramakrishna Math at Kuala Lumpur (F. M. S.), on account of a misunderstanding between the workers and some local members and legal difficulties, has detached itself in March 1925 from the old institution. A separate organisation has been started which has already attracted the sympathy of a large section of the Hindu public.

The philanthropic institutions have got dispensaries and hospitals attached to them which they are conducting with conspicuous success and ability, and they also undertake temporary relief on occasions of public distress. Among the prominent institutions of this kind we may mention those in Benares, Kankhal, Brindavan, Rangoon, Allahabad, Dacca, Narayanganj, Bhuvaneswar, Lucknow

and Barisal. There are institutions of such kind in almost all the districts of Bengal and in other parts of India. During the years under report, the headquarters at Belur organised temporary relief in some places of Bengal, Orissa and the Punjab.

As will be seen from a perusal of the Report, the majority of our centres throughout the country have got attached to them some sort of schools for imparting secular and religious education to the masses. The Sister Nivedita Girls' School with its two branches has been working in the direction of female education. The school itself has got about 250 students on its roll. As regards its policy it has chalked out a *via media* between the orthodox method of education and the ultra-liberal type. A few Mission centres manage students' homes where university students supplement their school and college education by a home-training based on the best elements of Eastern and Western culture. The Students' Home in Madras had 125 students on its roll at the end of 1924. There is a residential High School and an Industrial School attached to it. It is most gratifying to note that a separate block for the school has been erected at a cost of nearly a lac and twenty-five thousand rupees. The Students' Home in Calcutta which is licensed by the Calcutta University as a College Students' Hostel has done admirable work. The Vidyapith at Deoghar promises a brilliant future. It has been removed to its own premises containing nearly sixty bighas of land. Besides these there are similar institutions working on a smaller scale at Sargachi, Baranagore (Calcutta), Sarisha (24 Perganas) etc.

There are several Mission Funds kept open for public contribution. The generous public may contribute to the Provident Relief Fund, the General Fund, the Poor Fund or the Fund for the upkeep of the permanent philanthropic and educational institutions. All contributions may be sent to President, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal.



## A DECLARATION.

Swami Saradanandaji, Secretary of The Ramakrishna Mission, has sent us the following for publication :—

For sometime past, we have been receiving various queries, oral as well as written, from our friends and the outside public, regarding the relation of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society founded by the Swami Abhedananda in Calcutta and Darjeeling, with the Ramakrishna Mission which has its Headquarters at Belur, Dist. Howrah. Our information is, that sometime people wishing to help the Ramkrishna Mission have proposed to offer donations to the above institution, or co-operated with it in other ways, under the mistaken impression that it is a Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission. Moreover, complaints have reached us from some of our sympathisers who, working under the same impression, make the Ramkrishna Mission culpable for the ways and doings of the above institution. We understand that this misconception arises from the fact that the Vedanta Society bears the name of Ramkrishna and that the Swami Abhedananda is a direct disciple of Sri Ramkrishna, a trustee of the Ramkrishna Math and an ex-Vice-President of the Mission.

As it is our bounden duty to clear up the confusion and the false notion created in the public mind, we beg to inform our countrymen, as we did once before, that the Ramkrishna Vedanta Society with its branches is an independent organisation and has absolutely no connection with the Ramkrishna Mission, which has its Headquarters at Belur, Dist. Howrah.

In this connection we should draw the attention of the public also to the fact that the Ramkrishna Sangha of Calcutta and Dakshineswar is another independent institution which is in no way connected with the Ramkrishna Mission.

GLASGOW INDIAN UNION

We have received the following communication from Mr. D. Chakravarti, B.Sc., Information Department,

Glasgow Indian Union, C/o, The University, Glasgow, Scotland :—

"Quite a large number of students come over to Glasgow every year to join the University or the Technical Colleges and some of them are so very hopelessly ill-informed or positively mis-informed about the state of things here, that it is really a pity to see them getting so very unpleasantly undeceived within a few days of their arrival here. In fact we have realised the difficulties of the new-comers so thoroughly well, that we have thought it necessary to give greater publicity to the existing Information Department of our Union so that the latest and the best possible information could be supplied from the spot to all those who intend to come to Glasgow to join the University or to proceed with their technical education in some other way. My department will welcome all bona-fide enquiries from any students intending to come over here and all their enquiries will meet with prompt and whole-hearted attention."

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN THE DISTRICT OF MIDNAPORE, (BENGAL).

There being a very heavy flood in the district of Midnapore, we have sent three batches of workers to Contai, Tamluk and Sabong for relieving the flood-stricken people. From the reports so far received, the whole of Contai, Tamluk and Sabong Thanas are under water. Most of the houses have collapsed and the rest that are standing are in a tottering condition. Hundreds of men and women are starving. Carcases and thatched huts are floating here and there. All roads and means of communications are cut off. Even boats are not available for going into the interior parts of the villages to render relief to the sufferers. Our workers have already opened centres at Contai, Dasgram and Tamluk and are proceeding towards the most interior parts of the flood-area with much difficulty. At Dasgram they have already made the first distribution of rice to the people. Rice, Chira and con-

condensed milk for infants have been sent to Tamluk and Contai. From the innumerable letters and telegrams that are pouring in we learn that the situation is most serious and that to mitigate the sufferings of the people immediate help in money and kind is urgently needed. Every moment's delay means greater misery to the people, which might even end in loss of life. We appeal to the generous public to do all their best for relieving the distress of their helpless countrymen. Contributions may be sent to the following addresses :—

1. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O.  
Dist : Howrah.
2. The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukherji  
Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

Sd : SARADANANDA,

*Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.*

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# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत आगत



प्राप्य दशदिशोऽधत् ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

--SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXX.]      OCTOBER, 1926.      [No. 10.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

*2nd February, 1921.*

N— read out the first half of the Mundaka Upanishad. In the end the Swami observed: "Only the One exists, none else. We see Him as men, animals, birds, insects, plants etc. If we only think correctly, we shall find that there is no such differentiation in Him. How we imagine an ego and slave for its gratification ! Each has his own world which accompanies him beyond death. . . . It is enjoyment and the desire for it that obstructs true knowledge,—freed from it we can have it this moment. — Are we not Knowledge Itself ? But alas, it is so hard to renounce the joys of this world !

"Unless we are willing to understand, none can convince us. There was a king who promised the gift of half his kingdom to any one who would teach him the preparation of puffed rice. Many came and explained and demonstrated, but at the end the king always said

that he did not understand. How could he?—He simply *would* not! We are also like him. Who does not know that the world is transitory? But we refuse to feel convinced lest we also have to give away 'half the kingdom'—the enjoyments of the world."

N— : "But this hugging of sorrow, is it also not a sort of madness?"

Swami : "Yes, it is. But as a spiritual discipline it has great value, it purifies the mind.

"Merely saying 'I am Brahman' is no use as long as there is the least ignorance left in you. You must worship God. The Mother being pleased by worship grants both enjoyment and freedom. 'Take refuge, O King, in Her the Great Goddess. Being propitiated, She grants both worldly prosperity and spiritual emancipation.' These indeed are what Suratha and Samadhi did and were granted.

" 'What if Brahmâ, Vishnu or Siva teaches thee? Unless thou forgettest everything, thou shalt not be established in Self-realisation.'

" 'The whole universe being the effect of the real Brahman is in reality nothing but Brahman. Its essence is That, and it does not exist apart from It. He who says 'it is', is still under delusion,—he babbles like one asleep'."

3rd February, 1921.

The Mundaka Upanishad was finished to-day. The Swami made interesting comments during and at the end of the reading. "The mind," he said, "has to be withdrawn from the waking state to the dream state, from there to the deep sleep state, from there to the transcendental state. There is still another state beyond, called the Absolute.\* Gross, subtle, causal, supra-causal,

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\* The distinction between the transcendental (*Turiya*) and the Absolute (*Turiyâtita*) is a conceptual one. The concept of *Turiya* (lit. 'the fourth') is correlated to that of the three states of *Jagrat*, *Swapna* and *Sushupti*, and is therefore considered by some not truly representative of the absolute, unconditioned Brahman, for which

Pure Self,—such is the gradation. Of them the last two are quite close to each other. All these are experienced by the Yogis.

“ ‘Not from *Tapas* devoid of signs,’†—the ‘signs’ of this text are often taken to mean the ‘ochre robes’ etc. of the Sannyasin. But the explanation does not satisfy me. The *Brahma-Sutras* also have discussed the point. But how then did Janaka who was a householder realise the Truth? Vyasa once came on a visit to King Janaka with his monastic disciples. These disciples did not believe that the king was a man of the highest realisation and therefore did not show him proper respect. In order to prove the greatness of Janaka, Vyasa conjured up a mighty conflagration in the city, which came rushing on to consume the palace. The monks had left their loin-cloths drying in the sun. Seeing the flames drawing near, they rushed out to save them. But the king smiled and remained unmoved. He said, ‘Though Mithila is burning, nothing of *me*\* is burning.’ The real meaning of ‘signs’ is therefore *tyaga*—renunciation. Without renunciation there cannot be Self-knowledge.”

4th February, 1921.

“The Swami spoke enthusiastically, in course of the supper, about service and work. “Work done in the spirit of service can lead one as surely to the Goal as meditation and *japam*. Before he left the second time for the West, Swamiji said, ‘Here you will cultivate potatoes, and carry them on the head, if needed, for sale to the market. Again, when you will sit in meditation, you will plunge at once into Samadhi.’ You were there, S—, do you not remember it?”

S—: “Yes, Sir, I do.”

they use the term *Turiyātita* (lit. ‘transcending the fourth’). But as the realisation of even the *Turiya* state is not possible without transcending all conditions and limitations, the above distinction can scarcely be called real and is often ignored.

† Mundaka Upanishad, 3, 2, 4.

\* i.e., ‘of the Self.’ This indicated the true Self-knowledge of the king.

*Swami*: "All these have gone deep into our heart and become a part of our being. How can we forget them? I told you what Swamiji said to me at Darjeeling about instituting a new kind of Brahmacharya.\* Is that to be thrown away now?

"The Gita also, read between the lines, is found to emphasise work. There is a deeper meaning behind its saying that the Jnani has no work to do. It means that he has not, like the ordinary worker, any egoistic feeling attached to his work.

"All those old ideas that the Sannyasin shall renounce all works except begging, can no more satisfy us, especially after we have been enlightened by the life and teachings of the Master and Swamiji. They have thrown a new light on these things or given a new expression to the ancient light."

Hearing that a certain work was inconvenienced for want of a proper worker, the Swami said: "Never mind. Do your best. Work yourself to death, if need be. Nothing but good will come of it.

"I am against our work being done by paid men. Better you wind it up. . . . Go on working with full readiness to sacrifice even life for the Master's work. I am sure he will provide all necessary help in time. Do not worry.

"I do not at all like the idea of separating work from worship. Work is worship. All work is His service. I have rather seen people practising solitary *tapasya* becoming selfish. But the worker has to mix and live with many for the sake of his work and has thus to cultivate patience, sympathy, love and selflessness. Besides *upasana*, worship, also is work and its fruits also have to be dedicated to the Lord."

\* See *Prabuddha Bharata*, August, p. 339.

## A PLEA FOR REALISTIC EDUCATION

Every system of education has reference to a particular social and economical theory. The tragedy of Indian education is that it has no such reference. Or if it has any, it is to the Western social and economical theories. The Western economic ideal is mainly large-scale industrialism based on the social principle of extreme individualism and equality of opportunities. The Western outlook is extremely individualistic and induces fight and competition in every domain of life. Where opportunities are equal and the ideal individualistic, there competition is inevitable. The educational system is so adapted as to help these conditions. Every boy is entitled to receive the highest education that he may be best fitted to compete for and realise the highest destiny possible, and he will not halt in the mid-way unless circumstances compel him. The present educational system in India being a replica of the Western educational model necessarily tends towards the Western socio-economic system. But it happens that our socio-economic theories are almost the exact opposite of the Western ones. The consequence is a tragic conflict and barrenness of results.

One peculiarity of our educational system is that whereas it is more fruitful in its post-graduate sphere, it is extremely unreal and unprouctive in the graduation, secondary and primary courses. The reason is simple. The latter are constituted to serve only the ultimate post-graduate purpose *i.e.*, the purpose of research and conquest of new dominions of knowledge, and have no intrinsic value or aim of their own. Research is only one—and not the highest—of the aims of a true educational system. The more important purpose, in our opinion, is efficiency. Most, we may say ninety-nine per cent, of the students are unfit and do not care for contributing



new items to the fund of human knowledge. They are satisfied if they are properly equipped by their training to fight valiantly the battle of life and discharge adequately the various duties pertaining to their position in life and society. They want, in one word, to be efficient, that is to say, their training must have a close reference to their socio-economic position. [The moral education can be well left to family and social influences.] The present system unfortunately is least conscious of this aspect and the consequence has been simply ruinous. Every little boy, by the very nature of the education he receives, is made to aspire after the highest post-graduate education, for anything less than that is found useless and futile. So the boys forget their social position or inherited profession, become socially hybrid and economically inane; and as the honours and advantages of the highest university education fall to the lot of a spare few, the majority of them go about hunting for clerical employments and thus accelerate the advancing ruin of the country. Far better would it have been for themselves, the posterity and the country, if they had stuck to their parental professions.

The fact is, our educational system has begun at the wrong end. The few for the university, the many for the education of efficiency,—that is natural. The system ought to have been so formulated that most of the pupils might be properly trained to carry on *in their own villages* their hereditary occupations with greater efficiency and improved methods, instead of being enticed away from their native homesteads by the charms of urban and metropolitan institutions. For that is the only correct procedure in consonance with the socio-economics of India. Only a few ought to have been induced to go in for the higher education and fewer still for the university training. The system however has begun with the greatest stress on the university education which it has made the one ostensible aim of itself as well as of the student community, as if in the acquisition of it alone lies the fulfilment and fruition of life. Such blindness is one of the

many disastrous consequences of the Westernisation of our national life.

We find that Sir Brajendranath Seal also voices the same sentiments in his recent convocation address to the University of Bombay. He also feels like ourselves the estrangement of education from the realities of life and the urgent need of the socialisation of education. It is true he lays great stress on the university education. But what is important is that the socio-economic aspect of the educational problem has been generally overlooked, and it is for the first time that a scholar and educationist of the eminence of Dr. Seal emphasises its significance. Dr. Seal rightly observes that "under British rule, our Indian Universities, like our Indian Law Codes, have more or less fostered individualism, ... and even though the aims of University education have been utilitarian, they have been frankly pursued not for social service but for the individual's betterment in society." But with what signal failure! He further says, "It is not merely the individual's aptitudes and interests but also the needs and opportunities of the various social classes and functional groups that must be kept in view. The different grades and stages of education, literary or scientific, vocational, professional or technological, must be adapted to the variety of functions and interests in the social economy. The University in one word is to be a complete replica of the social life, for it is only life that can generate life."

Dr. Seal suggests a two-fold reform of the present conditions from the side of the society as well as the university. "Now it behoves us," he says, "to stress social education just as it is necessary to stress social legislation, the concept of society itself being enlarged and corrected so as to comprehend social equality and social justice as much as social solidarity and social stability. For this it is essential that every University should have a Board of Social Science, just as it should have a theatre, a museum, and a play-ground. Lectures and courses as well as sociological surveys should be organised

to bring every subject of study in the University, whether humanistic or naturalistic, into intimate and vital relationship with the social life of the country. Besides, a Social Service Mission, a Mission to the workers and the depressed classes in the slums and the environs of the city, is a primary obligation of the University. For it is the University that has created the gulf between the classes and the masses in India, a practical cleavage in place of the old human relationship that bound them close, and it is primarily the duty of the University to socialise education in order to recreate solidarity on the new basis of social justice and social equality."

The purpose of these suggested reforms is evidently to make the university, and of course the whole educational system, conform to the society and the realities of life. For as Dr. Seal well says, it is life that can generate life. It is no good looking at the world through the spectacles of books. But does not Dr. Seal think that even if the reforms were carried out, the educational system would still remain unsocial and unrealistic? The proposed Board of Social Science is at best an extraneous body with merely an intellectual function and outlook. The Social Service Mission is equally extraneous. Lectures and courses cannot bring one into *vital* relationship with the society. The only way, we think, is to *receive one's education without disturbing one's organic relations with the existing socio-economic system of the country*, and not to first go out of it through a perverted system of education and then seek to rejoin oneself to it through artificial intellectual and philanthropic interest. It is not really this or that detail that is wrong, but it is the whole system with its foreign outlook and wrong educational postulates that has created the present *impassé*, and unless it is radically reformed in accordance with the national ideals and with a strict eye to its socio-economic implications, no amount of enthusiasm or wisdom will avail anything. In our opinion, the solution lies in making the university the concern of the few and making the community—the social economy—itself res-

possible for the education of all the rest. This suggestion is not original. Such has been the system even as late as the introduction of English education.

The evils of the present system have already induced many to evolve different educational models. In the last analysis they all seem to be reduced to either of these two types. (1) One is content with providing in addition to the existing education some vocational training. It has not as yet shown very deep insight in its conception of either its end or method. One cannot formulate a true and correct curriculum of vocational training without previously ascertaining the nature of the country's social economy, for it is there that the trained will have to find scope and play of their energy and capacity. Will our country be industrialised? Is it to be large-scale industrialism with mills and factories? The vocational training then should be adapted to that ideal. Or would it be only a revival of cottage industries with perhaps improved machineries? The training also should be of that pattern. Will there be open and free competition in the economic field, or would it be neutralised by some such ingenious method as the caste system? Then there must or must not be graded and special education of the students in accordance with their socio-economic position. We cannot say that this type of education has devoted any serious thought to these considerations. It is extremely naïve in its conception and outlook. It either does not think deeply or builds up confidently on the Western socio-economic principles that form the basis of the existing educational system. Everyman is an integral part of the community and unless he is so equipped as to fit in with the prevailing ideas and lines of activity, he will be simply thrown out as useless and unwanted. It is not a question of the community being defective and the man ideally perfect,—it is a question of meeting the stern realities under the imposition of their own conditions.

(2) The other type aspires after an *ideal* development of the pupils somewhat after the Spencerian model. According to it, the trained man should be a harmony

of the fully developed body, intellect and morals, who has also received a proper vocational education to make him an efficient earning member of the community, and his development should be in the line of his healthy predispositions. It is presupposed that such a man will fit in with any healthy conditions of the community and will prosper magnificently. It takes for granted that the community in its ideal form is a combination of such ideal persons, and therefore there is no fear of any clash between the social conditions and the product of this education. The whole scheme is apparently a perfect one. But unfortunately it falls short of a fundamental consideration,—it ignores the pupil's socio-economic conditions. It takes him up as an absolute individual and not as a social being *par excellence*. It trains and develops him in the line of his intrinsic worth and tendencies *and not of his social possibilities*. *It is frankly individualistic in trend and aim, and therein lies the mischief*. Its products may be fine, but they are unrealistic. This type also, like the other one, does not consider that an individualistic education necessarily implies an individualistic socio-economic outlook with open fight and free competition in every field,—a scheme which is diametrically opposed to our national system. It may be that this type of education is intended to build up a class of men who will revolutionise the social system. But is that not itself a questionable ideal?

A fundamental canon of education is that the pupil should be educated in intimate touch with the realities. Through observation and experience, the evolving soul realises itself. Granted the truth of this canon, we cannot do better than educate every boy amidst and in close contact with the very circumstances in which he will have to live his life. With ninety per cent of people, the socio-economic position inherited through birth does not materially change. The object of education in their case is to equip them properly for that position. We need not assume the impossible and impractical ideal that every boy should be made a perfect man. Too high an ideal

often paralyses growth. Of course we do not suggest that they should not be allowed the opportunity of transcending the limitations of their birth. Our contention is that so far as their theoretical and practical training is concerned, they should be mainly guided by the considerations of their place in the life of the community. But every life has an aspect which is beyond the social control and in and through that it can realise its infinite potentialities. We mean the spiritual. We have put necessary restraint on the intellectual and the socio-economic freedom of men. But *spiritually*, we have allowed infinite freedom. We cannot have it both ways in this finite world. Unlimited freedom in every domain of life is an impossible ideal. We have therefore chosen the best, we have chosen the lesser evil.

We do not propose to formulate here any detailed scheme of education. But we hope we have made our point clear that no educational scheme will be successful without closely linking itself with the social economy of the country. We would suggest therefore that the educational system should as of old fall in a line with the caste system. The caste system is primarily a socio-economic principle. According to it every man has his social position and profession determined by his birth. The education that he needs is the best possible equipment for fulfilling the duties of that position and plying his hereditary trade under the improved conditions of the times. It is true that there may be occasional clash between caste regulations and individual aptitudes. The caste system does not propose to meet *all* situations. Perhaps there will be some cases in which the conflict will be inevitable. But in the large majority of cases, it will not occur at all. There may also be a partial limitation of intellectual education. Excessive intellectualism is scepticism. The average man cannot be allowed to evolve a sceptic outlook without prejudice to the communal well-being. But short of that, all fundamentals of knowledge should be transmitted even to the lowest caste. The prospect of intellectual limitation

however need not frighten us. In no age perhaps did the claim of intellect become so abnormal as in the present age. *It is the training and refinement of the inner man, of his feelings and springs of action, that constitutes the essence of education*, and the caste system does not stand in the way of it. It is on the other hand an extremely potent machinery of that essential education.

It must not be understood that we are putting in any plea for the caste system. We do not prophesy that it will survive the present crisis, though we do believe that it will, with certain modifications. For it is unthinkable that a social constitution that has withstood the powerful onslaughts of millenniums will collapse before the present one. Whatever the form of social economy that will emerge in future, our education cannot grow without being closely interlinked with it. It is vain to propose educational reform without previously determining the lines of socio-economic reconstruction. In the mean-time we may begin with the existing social economy. Let education, so far as vocational training goes, be imparted on the caste basis, being accompanied by the fundamentals of theoretical knowledge. But let great effort be taken to reawaken in the pupils their social conscience and spirit of social service, to make them noble and efficient citizens. Of course this must go hand in hand with village reconstruction, for unless the village artisans are provided with a local market, free of competition, for their wares, the suggested scheme of education will prove absolutely futile.

The villages are calling for the devoted service of the economist and the social reformer. But they call more urgently for the educationist. It is not the foreign exploiters alone that have depleted our erstwhile smiling villages of their robust and efficient manhood, but also the well-meaning educationists with their unwary idealism, whose schools and colleges have been so many pitfalls and death-traps. Do not, O educational reformers, do not any more tempt our boys away from their village homes. Come to them to their own homes with your learning and

wisdom and serve them there. Do not, in your ignorance, break the life-strings that bind them to their native soil.

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## GREAT HEART\*

(*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*)

BY J. CALDWELL-JOHNSTON

A white flame burning in a swampy place,  
Mere squelchy wilderness of reed and briar,  
Tussocks and rotten turf-stuff, and the mire  
That sucks and slavers round each planted pace ;  
The wide, unwinking sky's blind-seeing face,  
Moonless, unstarred, where now and then mock fire,  
Dancing, deludes wan hearts and feet that tire,  
Yet deeper, deathward, lures into the maze—  
God made of thee a beacon. We to thee  
Tend not, but circling keep upon our road.  
Thou givest us the light, wherewith to see  
Our stumbling-stones, and our too-heavy load  
Thou eatest. Yea, thou, standing steadfastly,  
Smilest on us the sure, sweet Smile of God.

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\* From the *Asiatic Review*, London.



## DIFFICULTIES OF WESTERN WORKERS IN INDIA.

[LETTERS OF SISTER NIVEDITA]

The following two letters written by the late Sister Nivedita to an American lady who wanted to come to serve and work for India, will be found, we think, interesting and useful. The Sister surely was one who could speak with authority of the difficulties of a Western worker in India and the attitude of mind such a one should cultivate in order to profit most by the undertaking. We have known persons who came to India with perhaps the best of motives, but simply because they did not properly attune themselves to the ideals and conditions prevailing here, they had to return disappointed. The suggestions in the second letter are extremely valuable in this connection. One may also remember here the words of caution Swami Vivekananda wrote to the Sister when *she* sought to cast her lot with ourselves. We reproduce them here :

"Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India..... Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted. Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion. [Conditions have since changed for the better.—*Ed.*]

"Then the climate is fearfully hot ; our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing. Not one European comfort is to be had

in places out of the cities. If in spite of all this you dare venture into the work, you are welcome, hundred times welcome. You must think well before you plunge in, and afterwards, if you fail in this or get disgusted, on my part I promise you *I will stand by you unto death* whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. 'The tusks of the elephant come out but never go back ;'—so are the words of a man never retracted. I promise you that. Again I must give you a bit of warning. You must stand on your own feet and not be under the wings of.....anybody....."

But the Sister came in the face of all these dire warnings, and we know her name occupies a prominent place in the history of modern India.—*Editor, P. B.*

## I

17, BOSE PARA LANE,  
Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.  
1st December, 1905.

Dear Miss B.,

Your letter was the last thing I read in March last, before falling ill with brain fever and typhoid. So it was lost for months, and I cannot remember that when it was found I answered it.

It sounds as if your whole idea were to help and serve. And if that is so, there is any amount to be done. But we always discourage people from coming to India if they *want* anything, even spiritual things, out of it, as they are sure to be disappointed. Not that India has nothing to give, but because only he who longs to serve can get into the right attitude for serving.

A trained nurse has knowledge that is badly wanted here, where custom is the only guide, and where knowledge has to come instead. But without a knowledge of the language, how are you to teach? And the language takes much learning, and it is worth while only if you will stay here long.

One can do a wonderful amount for very little here. But then you find so many ways of using money! We

have a school for instance in which help would be valuable. Sister Christine has a higher school, for mothers and young wives. Again sewing and cutting-out are important subjects here. Then Calcutta is full of students who need workers.

You *sound* nice, but if you came, you might want to live in quarters of your own. Well, on \$10 a week you could, in a humble way, keep house.\* But you would

\* Living expenses have increased since this letter has been written.—*Ed.*

need rather more in order to go to the hills in May and June and again in October, which are almost necessary holidays. Again in case of illness, you would need more.

If you are consumed with a desire to help, difficulties will seem nothing to you and will be made to melt away. But if your feeling is less than this, you will be better out of India. We always advise people not to come unless they can command enough money to take them back.

Did you know Swamiji?

Very faithfully yours,

NIVEDITA OF RK.-V.

## II

17, BOSE PARA LANE,  
Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.  
28th March, 1906.

Dear Miss B.,

I cannot remember what I wrote to you. But I am quite sure I warned you of many difficulties in the way of workers in India. People complain of disillusionment on coming here, and this is especially apt to be the case with workers from America, where you are all so luxurious in your habits!

If you were ever to come to India, it is my firm belief that the one way in which to obtain the true orientation is by trying to live exactly like an orthodox Hindu woman. This becomes a kind of sacrament, and has an effect on one that I cannot explain. It is possible, through it, to

change one's whole centre of gravity. But when I think of all the help that came to myself in doing this, under the wings of Swamiji's own presence, and in the house of the Holy Mother (Sarada Devi), I feel that no one else can ever again have such an opportunity. The more ways in which this can be done, the better. Worship is of course one of these ways. But this is, at first, extremely difficult. Only, if one has the true impulse, one never gives up.

About language, if you really mean to come some day, it would be an immense advantage to know some Bengali—if for this part—or Hindi—if for other parts. You would need to have a start from some one of the Swamis. I could send you books.

I wonder if you really are one of the future! I cannot at all tell.

Very sincerely,  
NIVEDITA OF RK.-V.

## THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Max Müller, concluding the chapter on Vedanta in his *Six Systems of Philosophy*, remarks, "It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedanta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India thousands of years ago, a system that even now makes us feel giddy, as in mounting the last steps of the swaying spire of an ancient Gothic cathedral. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightning. Stone follows on stone in regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One as there will be One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman."

The mere denial of the objective world in its system of philosophy does not constitute the greatest glory of the Advaita Vedanta. Some other schools, e.g., the idealist and the sensationalist also have thought in the same way. But the giddy height reached by the Advaita system is its absolute identification of Jiva and Brahman, the individual soul and the Highest Self. Other philosophers have denied the reality of the world as perceived by us, but no one has ventured to deny at the same time the reality of what we call the ego, the senses and the mind, and their inherent forms. In order to understand the subtle arguments by which the Advaita philosophers reached this wonderful conclusion, it is necessary to know another essential feature of that philosophy. It is the bold division of all experiences into two groups, namely, the Subject and the Object in the sense of the real and the phenomenal, and the bold declaration of the identity of the Subject and the Object, or the complete absorption of the Object by the Subject. We shall try here to show the nature of the Subject and the Object.

Sankara in his introduction to the commentary of the *Vedanta Sutra* writes, "As it is well-known that the Object and the Subject, which fall under the concepts of *you* and *I*, are in their very essence opposed to each other, like darkness and light, and that the one can never therefore take the place of the other, it follows therefore that their attributes also can never be interchanged. Therefore we may conclude that to transfer what is objective, that is, what is perceived as *you* or non-ego with its qualities, to what is subjective, that is, what is perceived as *I*, the ego, which consists of thought, or *vice versa* to transfer what is subjective to what is objective, must be altogether wrong. Nevertheless, it is a habit of man to say, combining what is true and what is false, 'I am this, 'This is mine,' etc. This is a habit, caused by a false apprehension of subject and predicate, by not distinguishing the one from the other and by superimposing the essence and the qualities of the one upon the other."

According to the Advaita philosophy one who experiences is the Subject and that which is experienced is the Object. "I" am the Subject and "you" are the Object. By the word "you" is not meant only the person seated before me. It denotes "you" as well as Tom, Dick, Harry, trees, plants, sun, moon, mountains, etc. Because all these can, at one time or other, come before me as an object of my experience. Even my senses, intellect and mind are objects because these also are objects of my experience. Again I divide objects into two groups. I take some of them, such as you, Tom, Dick or Harry as conscious, and I hold others, such as trees, plants etc., as unconscious. This division is not, absolutely speaking, a true one. It is only empirically true. I must make this division for the conduct of my daily life. Only the Subject or "I" is the conscious entity and everything else is unconscious. If any of the objects appears as conscious, that is because of my imagination. That objectified consciousness has no absolute reality. This Subject "I" is the embodied creature known as Jiva, and all else forming objects of experience constitute the world outside it. Therefore the Subject and the Object are totally different in nature. The qualities of the Subject can never inhere in the Object and *vice versa*. Such statements as "I am strong" or "I am weak" arise from a confusion of the understanding of the real nature of the Subject and the Object and is due to Avidya which is to be overcome and destroyed by Vidya or Knowledge—the supreme aim of the Vedanta philosophy.

Now what is the apparent relation between the Subject and the Object? At first it appears that the universe is quite independent of me. Untrammelled and unhampered by any action of mine it appears to go on along its own way from time immemorial and perhaps will do so for eternity. But still there is a relation between me and the universe. The outside phenomena always present to me various sensations, such as touch, smell, sound etc., and these are carried to my mind by my

senses. Certain sensations appear to me as pleasing and I feel myself happy at their contact, whereas other sensations appear as bitter and they make me unhappy. Some of the sensations conduce to my happiness in life and others give rise to misery. Thus I seem always dependent upon the Object for my weal or woe. Further, I am always struggling to shun the objects of painful sensations and embrace those of pleasing ones. This constant struggle with the Object constitutes my life, and it goes on as long as I live. That moment when I come in contact with these phenomena may be called my birth, and the moment when the connection is cut off may be called my death, and the period between these two limits is what I call my life. All my works appear dependent upon the Object. I reap the fruits of these works in this life or the next. The Hindu philosophers who believe in the transmigration of soul, say that this contact with the Object does not cease with my death. I must be born again and enjoy the fruits of the works done here in this present life. It cannot be said that the contact with the Object begins with my present life. I have passed through many previous births and come in contact with the Object many a time before this. In fact, my present life is the result of my previous Karma, only I do not retain the memory of my previous lives. But on that ground alone one cannot deny them. Without a belief in this law of rebirth one cannot explain the misery and happiness existing in the world. There cannot be any moral justification of the working of this universe. It is impossible to say when my contact with the Object began and it is equally difficult to declare when it will come to an end. This apparently endless series of activities inhering in the ever-going series of births and deaths constitutes the *Samsara* or the world.

Sometimes I appear to acquire control over the objects spread before me, and then I become happy, and at other times I fall a victim to the forces of phenomena and then appear to feel miserable. This inexorable wheel of the universe is revolving along its fixed path

from eternal past and will go on to eternal future. I am as it were but a tiny creature fastened to a spoke of this mighty wheel, and I appear now crushed under its pressure or again released for the time being from its heavy weight. But ultimately every creature must be ground to dust under the pressure of this wheel and there is no escape for anybody from its unerring revolution. The monarch sitting on his throne and the poor cowering on the dust, the conqueror marching at the head of his triumphant cohorts and the weak trampled under his horses, the young strutting in the pride of their vigour and the old tottering on their frail sticks, the philosopher with all his wisdom and the fool with all his ignorance, man with all his strength and woman with all her beauty, the boy spreading sunshine with his laughter and the girl beaming with her gentle blush,—everybody, it seems, has been crushed by this mighty wheel of the universe. Boast of heraldry, pomp of power, flush of wealth and pride of beauty, all have fallen victims to the inevitable working of the Object. There was no escape and there will be no escape from the unrelenting grasp of the seemingly all-powerful Object. It is independent of me in all respects and I believe it to be outside me and infinitely more powerful. It has been going along its own path and I have no control over its working. Though at times I acquire a little mastery over its forces, in the end I am defeated by it and overwhelmed by its superior forces. And this appears to be my inevitable end.

This appears to be the apparent relation between me and the Object. The universe is great and I am small, it is mighty and I am weak. I live dependent upon it and therefore feel pleasure and pain and are subject to birth and death. But the Advaita philosophers say otherwise. They say that it seems so because of your ignorance. The Subject or "I" is the Almighty and the Object or the universe is dead and dull matter.

The Object rises from and continues in the imagination of the Subject and, absolutely speaking, has no reality.



Like dreams seen in sleep, the phenomena are unreal. The universe from the standpoint of the Absolute is false.

स्वप्नजागरिते स्थाने ह्येकमाहुर्मनीषिणः ।

भेदानां हि समत्वेन प्रसिद्धे नैव हेतुना ॥

“The wise regard the wakeful as well as the dreaming condition as one, in consequence of the similarity of the objective experience in either, on grounds which are well known.”

Again,

स्वप्नमाये यथा दृष्टे गन्धर्वनगरं यथा ।

तथा विश्वमिदं दृष्टं वेदान्तेषु विचक्षणैः ॥

“As are dream and illusion or a castle in the air, so, say the wise, the Vedantas declare this cosmos to be.”

This is the nature of the universe or the Object or phenomena, which appears as almighty and all-powerful to the ignorant. The Vedanta philosophy, the Buddhist as well as some idealistic philosophies of the West too do not admit the absolute reality of the universe. It is nothing but the creation of the Subject. I project the universe outside me and then look upon it as an independent reality. Speaking about creation, Gaudapâda says :

कल्पयत्यात्मनात्मानमात्मा देवः स्वमायया ।

स एव बुध्यते भेदानिति वेदान्तनिश्चयः ॥

“The effulgent Atman, objectifies himself through the power of his Maya; he alone cognises the objects so sent forth. This is the last word of the Vedanta on the subject.”

Again,

विकरोत्यपरान् भावान् अन्तश्चित्ते व्यवस्थितान् ।

नियतांश्च वह्निश्चित्त एव कल्पयते प्रभुः ॥

“The Lord manipulates the variety of subjective experience as well as that of objective experience, while

cognisant of the Subjective and the Objective respectively."

This is the Advaita explanation of the universe and perhaps the most rational explanation too. God has manufactured the world out of nothing ; He has created woman from the rib of man ; the whole world rests upon the heads of four serpents or dragons ;—these ideas cannot stand to reason. However appealing they may be to our feeling, these puerile theories in trying to explain make the confusion worse confounded. The very word "creation" is a misnomer and does not mean the same thing which the Sanskrit word "सृष्टि" *Srishti*, denotes. The idea of creation may be justified by the dualists or even by a class of idealists who believe in the 'आरम्भवाद' or the theory of "absolute beginning." The Naiyayikas and the Vaisheshikas believe in it. Kapila and Patanjali put forth the theory of "परिणामवाद" or the transformation of cause into effect. But the Vedantists declare their famous theory of "विवर्तवाद" or the absolute identity of cause and effect. The Self is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. The very word *Srishti* is a key to their theory. The word is derived from the root "सृज्" —"Srij"—which means to throw or project. And according to this theory the Subject throws his own experience outside and transforms it into the Object and then creates the phenomenal universe. The process by which the objective world is evolved from the Subject's own self is called *Srishti* or creation in the Vedanta philosophy. As Swami Vivekananda said, a grain of sand enters into the shell of a pearl-oyster and sets up an irritation there and the oyster reacts towards the irritation and covers the little particle with its own juice. That crystallises and forms the pearl. The whole universe is like that ; it is the pearl which is being formed out of our own self by us. What we get from the external world is simply the "irritation". Even to be conscious of that we have to react and as soon as we react, we really project a portion of our mind. Thus the external world has no absolute reality. It is moulded, formed and fashioned by my

own mind. It may have empirical reality, but absolutely speaking, the Object is totally unreal. I am the only reality and I see my self. In the language of Gaudapâda, I manipulate both subjective and objective experiences and cognise them as such. The Advaita philosophy does not admit the existence of any other creation except this nor does it recognise the existence of a Prakriti or Nature, primordial, unknown and independent of the Subject. It says, "सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म"—All this is really Brahman—and I am that Brahman—"अहं ब्रह्मास्मि". The true knowledge thus consists in the recognition of the absolute identity of the Subject and the Object.

In our next we hope to show the nature of the Subject.

### "WILL ASIA BECOME CHRISTIAN?"

The press reported some time ago the summary of a fine speech by the Dean of St. Paul's on the future prospects of the Christian Missions in Asia. Dean Inge entertains no illusion about proselytising the East. He says, "It is a mistake to suppose that Asia was calling to Europe for more light. On the whole, the settled opinion of the East is that the less they have to do with Western ideas, thought and policy, the better for the East." This consciousness however is no deterrent to the Dean in sending missionaries to the East. Only, he thinks, they should be better equipped than before and change their angle of vision. They should be "full of love and sympathy, without any racial prejudices, will try to study the lives and beliefs of the people to whom they go, seeing on the whole what is best in them." "What we most need," he says, "in all our missionary work is a few men who are really living such a life as apostles of Christ ought to live, whose lives are a living testimony not only that they believe what they teach, but that what they teach is the most holy and beautiful creed that could be

believed and professed." We confess the last sentence jars on our ear. It is always *belief* they emphasise and further that *theirs* is the best religion, as if mere belief constituted sainthood and the strength of the Christ's original apostles, or that such subtle arrogance in religion will pay in these days. Why could not the Dean suggest that the preachers of Christianity must be as pure, as free from worldliness, as full of devotion and self-surrender as was Christ himself, that they must see God face to face before they go out preaching Him? Really it seems difficult even for the best minds of the West to truly comprehend the psychology of religious life. A true Christian, permeated through and through by the consciousness of God, is a blessing and welcome everywhere. Such a one never antagonises any creed or faith, is content with silent service and knows that mere conversion to verbal formulas does not constitute spirituality.

Anyhow, the Dean seems to be somewhat ahead of his dogmatic class. He is above reproach when he says, "Supposing they worship a being with the same attributes, it does not very much matter whether they call him Buddha or Christ. We must look to things rather than words." This is indeed fine.

It is interesting to note how silently and remarkably the attitude of the Christian missionaries towards other creeds is changing. At first it was a sort of arrogant and self-sufficient way of declaring the immense superiority of their doctrines. To revile other religions without understanding them and sometimes without regard to truth, was considered the best means of propagating Christianity. This did not prove successful. There was, and still is, the other way of alluring converts by material prospects. Floods, famines and epidemics offer fine opportunities to certain kinds of missionaries. We know cases in which the hungry were given the choice of conversion or starvation. But a better and a more refined section has developed another means. It is well-informed criticism of the Indian philosophies and creeds and demonstration through it of the comparative superiority of the Christian

religion. This is quite honest, so long as the critics are scrupulously faithful to reason. We are confident, Indian philosophy and religion will not suffer in comparison with other systems of the world. But a more insidious process is to proclaim in season and out of season that all improvements of the non-Christian peoples in the present age are due directly or indirectly to the Christian influence. If there are social reforms, they are the outcome of the benign influence of Christianity! Are there religious reforms? Christianity must be at the bottom of them! And the heathens are slowly coming to the foot of the Cross, though the ungrateful creatures would not admit it! These insinuations are subtle manifestations of the old spirit. Christianity must anyhow come to the top! Thus Bishop Fred B. Fisher, returning from a tour in India about three years ago, thus expressed himself in an interview printed in *Zion's Herald*: "They (missionaries) are creating a soul under the ribs of death—bringing something alive, active, constructive, into the bodies of the old dead religions of India. The big reform movements in Hinduism, Mohammedanism, and Buddhism, everywhere to be found in India, are part and parcel of the Christianizing process. From the Roof of the World to the Indian Ocean this new awakening of the old, dead faiths is evident. We hear a great deal about 'modern Hinduism,' 'modern Mohammedanism,' which are, however, contradictions in terms. To modernize Hinduism and Mohammedanism is to destroy them as they have heretofore existed. The word of Jesus Christ has done that. The ideals and ethics of the Nazarene are the big moving forces in the modernization of Indian religions, which are taking them over unto themselves, incorporating the principles of Jesus into their own beliefs. The Christian competition can be met in no other way. The East must assimilate Christianity or be assimilated by it. It is one and the same thing in result. And by a series of reformations the great religions of the East will in time leave off the shells of idolatry, superstition, immorality, and caste, and follow Christ—in their own Oriental

way." The learned Bishop adds that Christianity "is the only religion that can stand the advance of knowledge and the revelations of science." Comments are unnecessary on such splendid researches.

Evidently Dean Inge is not so forward and optimistic as that reverend gentleman. For, he confesses that "all fail to see in the European nations, as they find them, true followers of the gospel which they profess to believe in." He says, "They (Asians) condemn our religion as ineffective." But he also can think of only two alternatives before the non-Christian religions; either they would become nominally Christians or Christianity will modify still further the old religions without destroying them. It did not occur to him that there is a third alternative of religions (not excluding Christianity) developing in their own ways and influencing each other when such influence is found necessary and beneficial. We think the better minds among the Christians could easily take a nobler attitude towards alien religions, such as Mr. C. F. Andrews and many others have taken, and such as the Dean himself seems to have partially done. Why can they not believe that truth is nobody's monopoly, not even of Christ, and that there have been many teachers like him in different times and countries? Is it so hard to feel in this scientific age that spirituality is inherent in every man and nation, and that it is best to allow each to grow in his individual way? The clear and simple duty of every servant of God, of whatever religion, becomes then simple service, silent and unobtrusive, and not obstruction and criticism of any one's faith. But alas, the missionaries can scarcely forget the original idea with which their proselytism began, that Christianity is the only true religion and Christ the only saviour and that the heathens must be converted to save their souls!

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## INDIA'S SECULAR ACHIEVEMENTS.

BY HARIPADA GHOSAL, M.A., M.R.A.S., VIDYABINODE

It has often been said that India is a land of dreamers, of philosophers, mystics and idealists, that the Indians are "passive," "meditative," "quiet," and that the world is an illusion, a mirage to them. Prof. Max Müller says, "No wonder that a nation like the Indian cared so little for history ; no wonder that social and political virtues were little cultivated, and the ideas of the Useful and the Beautiful scarcely known to them. \* \* They shut their eyes to this world of outward seeming and activity, to open them full on the world of thought and rest. Their life was a yearning after eternity ; their activity a struggle to return into that divine essence from which this life seemed to have severed them" (Max Müller's *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, P. 10).

Western scholars are apt to say that the philosophical temperament of the Indians was in the main responsible for their utter neglect of worldly concerns. They affirm that the Indian people never played a prominent part in the history of the world. Westerners think that the active and moral character of the Indians were affected by such an atmosphere of transcendentalism, that their metaphysical speculations enfeebled their practical faculties. They believe that life in India moved in a narrow groove, that the circle of political existence in India was small, and thus the Indians did not possess all those qualities which gain for a nation its permanent place in history.

Such impudent assertions of Western scholars will not bear scrutiny. They are mere half-truths. Greece and her achievements may loom large in the eyes of European scholars, Alexander's campaign may occupy a large space in the history of ancient India as conceived by them, military schemes of an ambitious nature like those of

Alexander may be, according to them, beyond the conception of Indian princes, yet India's achievements are not so unworthy as they think. India's work in the field of practical politics is not negligible. Whatever may be said of India before the invasion of Alexander, the long periods from 300 B. C. to 100 B. C. and again from the third century to the sixth century A. D. were indeed glorious and can be matched with any period of military greatness, any age of imperialistic or political organisation, any epoch of intellectual activity in the history of the world. Those famous lines of Mathew Arnold are, to say the least, extremely erroneous and mischievous :

“The East bowed low before the blast,  
In patient, deep disdain ;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.”

But impartial history shows that the East did not “plunge into thought again.” Alexander's invasion was a passing storm indeed. It “was in actual effect no more than a brilliantly successful raid on a gigantic scale, which left upon India no mark save the horrid scars and bloody war” (V. Smith). This celebrated historian makes statements which are contradictory. Says he, “India was not hellenized. She continued to live her life of ‘splendid isolation,’ and soon forgot the passing of the Macedonian storm. No Indian author, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, makes even the faintest allusion to Alexander or his deeds.” But when he comes to speak of Chandragupta's Second Board, he says, “The existence of these elaborate regulations is conclusive proof that the Maurya empire in the third century B. C. was in constant intercourse with foreign states, and that large numbers of strangers visited the capital on business.” It is a pity that a historian of the standing and reputation of Vincent Smith should be so much biased as not to recognise Indian genius in international concerns. He repudiates “the paradox of Niese that the whole subsequent development of India was dependent upon Alexander's institutions,” but at the



same time does not fail to repeat that India "continued to live her life of splendid isolation." Can this be called scientific history or the exclusion of "subjective element" in the treatment of facts?

Max Müller says that an ambitious scheme of conquest like that of Alexander was inconceivable to an Indian prince. But is this not ignorance with a vengeance? Not to speak of kings before Alexander, there were emperors like Chandragupta who ruled from 322 B. C. to 298 B. C. and his empire extended all over "Northern India and a large part of Ariana" (Smith). Asoka, his grandson, further extended that empire to include the whole of Southern India excepting the extreme south. Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha, became the centre of international system and India became the first power of the world. Neither Alexandria, nor Rome, nor Athens could vie with Pataliputra in diplomatic importance. The imperialistic state of Chandragupta followed a policy of non-intervention and preserved a perfect neutrality in matters of faith like the modern state. It was busy in empire-building and nation-making enterprises according to the political and economic principles, the financial theories and militaristic instructions, propounded and incorporated by an Indian Machiavelli in his celebrated *Artha-Shastra*, one of the most perfect treatises of the kind in the world. The general rules of morality, duties of princes and state officials, arts, sciences, and social customs and institutions are represented by *Sukra-Niti* which did not neglect positive sciences, such as geography, ethnology, mineralogy, botany and zoology. Can any nation, ancient or modern, boast of such an authentic treatise on social morals as the *Manava-Dharma-Shastra*, the Laws of Manu? The science of erotics as set forth in the *Kama-Shastra* of Vatsyayana of the 2nd century B. C. received the attention of the ancient Hindus. The 32 *Vidyas* or Sciences, and 64 *Kalas* or practical arts enumerated in this book were cultivated. The physical sciences including chemistry and medicine were far superior in their development

to what was prevalent in Europe at a very late time. Physiology, logic, grammar and philology received due attention. The internationalism of Chandragupta continued under his successors. His son Bindusar received an embassy from the king of Egypt and had correspondence with Antiochus of Syria. Asoka's ambitious desire of becoming a world-monarch led him to send embassies to the kings of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus and Kyrene, to Ceylon and to the Cholas and the Pandyas of South India. The eighth chapter of the *Dipavansa* and the twelfth chapter of the *Mahavansa* give a detailed account of the embassies sent by Asoka to the different countries of the world. In post-Asokan times from 200 B. C. to 250 A. D., "there was trade both overland and by sea with Western Asia, Greece, Rome and Egypt as well as with China and the East. Pliny mentions vast quantities of specie that found its way every year from Rome to India." There was intercourse with Rome during the ascendancy of the Kushans and with China as early as 217 B. C.

Thus in point of time and culture the Maurya empire (320 B. C.) is the first empire in the history of the world, the second was that of the Chinese (220 B. C.) and the third was that of the Roman (1st century A. D.). Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya (375—413 A. D.) of the Gupta dynasty, was in direct touch with sea-borne commerce with Europe through Egypt. Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji's *History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity* shows that the ancient Hindus were not behind their Western compeers in the making of crafts. The heroic pioneers of that maritime age were imbued with the world-sense. They were not bigots whose angle of vision had become narrow by race prejudice. The age of the Guptas was impregnated with ideas of internationalism.

Vincent Smith says, "The Gupta period, taken in a wide sense, as extending from about 300 A. D. to 650 A. D. and meaning more particularly the fourth and fifth centuries, was a time of exceptional intellectual activity

in many fields—a time not unworthy of comparison with the Elizabethan and Stuart period in England.” Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar speaks of the renaissance in the Gupta era in the following terms: “It was a new India, this India of the Guptas—a new stage, new actors, and what is more, a new outlook. Extensive diplomatic relations with foreign powers, military renown of *Digvijaya* at home, overthrow of the ‘barbarians’ on the western borderland, international trade, maritime activity, expansion of the motherland, missionising abroad, the blending of races by the flesh and blood of the population was almost renewed, and social transformation as epoch-making as the first Aryanisation itself—all these ushered in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era a thorough rejuvenation and a complete overhauling of the old order of things in Hindustan” (*Chinese Religion*, Pp. 217-18).

The Gupta power was at its zenith during the reigns of Chandragupta II and Kumaragupta I. Dhanvantari the physician, Kshapanaka the philologist, Amar-simha the lexicographer, Sanku the elocutionist, Vetala-bhatta the necromancer, Ghatakarpar the politician, Kalidas the poet, Varahamihir the astronomer and mathematician, and Vararuchi the grammarian were the celebrated luminaries who flourished during that age of marvellous growth and many-sided activities. Arya-bhatta the mathematician also belonged to this age. Varahamihir is willing to learn from even the Mlechchhas and Yavanas who are well-versed in the sciences and they should be “respected as Rishis.” He acknowledges his indebtedness to Greek astronomy and is ever ready to learn from any body irrespective of caste and creed. Hence the ancient Hindus were not as averse to float along the culture-currents of the world as the protagonists of Hellenic culture so loudly proclaim to minimise India’s achievements. What the Hindus did in the field of positive sciences, in chemistry, biology etc. before the appearance in Europe of Descartes, Liebnitz, Bacon and Newton on the theatre of the world-culture during the

comparatively recent times, has been ably shown by eminent scholars like Dr. Seal, Dr. Roy, and Prof. Sarkar. The contributions of the Hindus to world-culture were by no means negligible. Prof. Sarkar writes, "It may be mentioned, in passing, that among others the decimal system of notation, circulation of blood, use of zinc in pharmacopœia and an exact anatomical system were known in India earlier than in Europe."

Thus the ancient Hindus since the 6th century B. C., leaving aside the long period of growth prior to Buddha, down to the 10th century A. D. did not live in "splendid isolation," cut off from the main current of civilisation and universal culture, and did not "plunge in thought" or did not take shelter in passivity, meditation and quietude, devoid of any broad outlook of the future. They were not so many lotus-eaters shut up in a world of their own "without a past and without a future before them." Both the inward and outward life of the Hindus changed and adapted themselves to changing circumstances.

C. N. K. Aiyar says in his book, *Sri Sankaracharya : His Life and Times*, "India suffers to-day in the estimation of the world more through the world's ignorance of the achievements of the heroes of Indian history than through the absence or insignificance of such achievements." India is more sinned against than sinning. Writers like Macaulay in the early days of British rule were led more by ignorance and prejudice than by right judgment and true perception of things. They dogmatically opined that the whole library of Oriental literature does not consist of a dozen of readable books. When prejudice and the idea of racial inferiority once gained ground, it became very difficult to root them out. The culture of centuries lay conserved in the pages of Sanskrit books which were sealed to men like Macaulay. But their impudence and dogmatism vitiated their good sense, and they did not hesitate to put forward half-truths and assumptions in an authoritative manner and an air of reality. But at last Jones, Williams and Wilson came into the field of Oriental culture and cleared many mis-

conceptions and errors by their honest spade-work. This work however requires a new orientation in the light of modern research, and Indian scholars should act as high-priests and sponsors in this new baptism of Indian history. It should no more be left to the patronising care of foreigners who fail to interpret the Indian mind in its true perspective.

India's gift to world-culture will then be considered immense by all good scholars. "To every orthodox European scholar, philosophy as well as general civilisation begin with Greece and in text-books of history of human culture, it is the precursors of Plato and Aristotle that are described as the first seers of truths and civilisers of mankind ; other systems of thought and discoveries of doctrines being roughly classified as "Oriental," pre-economic, pre-political and hence not worth the trouble and pains of an investigator" (Sarkar). To many European Indologists, Indian people of the ancient and medieval times appear to be nothing but so many invertebrate human beings with no historical, political and economic outlook. The latest researches in the field of Indian history have unearthed many Indian Frederick the greats, Machiavellis, men of action and politicians. Indian people may be a nation of philosophers, but the accusation "that social and political virtues were little cultivated and the ideas of the Useful and the Beautiful scarcely known to them," as dogmatically set forth by Max Müller, is without foundation and is an evidence of his reading Indian history in an unhistorical way. There were mystics and God-men to whom life on earth was not such as it appears to us, but there were also others to whom life was a reality. Social and political life in India was not a blank. But mysticism is not the privilege of the Orient ; the Occident also has its ample share in it : the mentality of the East is not merely philosophical and religious but material and secular also. Hitherto India has been interpreted only in terms of creeds and dogmas, as a prodigious bundle of metaphysico-religious systems only.

Young India seeks to present its gifts to the world-culture in all departments of human knowledge, and wants the nations of the world to recognise it as such. Young India wants a "transvaluation of values" and a new synthesis for the furtherance of the progress of humanity. Her endeavours to disseminate the valuable teachings of the Vedanta should take "the form of aggressive and adventurous patriotism and thus sow broadcast the seeds of a Twentieth Century Renaissance."

The time has come for Indian scholars to address themselves to the great task of writing a true history of India. The work is so vast and immense that individual effort seems chimerical and one life is too short for a work so gigantic in its scope and variety. But any work may be completed by collaboration, by the contributions of specialists in different periods. In this great work scholars like Professors Bhandarkar, A. C. Das, Mazumdar, and Radhakumud will take up the ancient period of Vedic culture, Pandit H. P. Shastri the Buddhist period, Prof. J. N. Sarkar and others the Muhammadan period, Prof. Benoy K. Sarkar the history of social evolution and folk culture, Dr. Seal Indian philosophy and positive sciences, Drs. Ray and Bose physical sciences, Prof. Krishnaswamy the history of South Indian culture Prof. Radhakamal the history of Indian economics and other competent writers the history of the British period.

If the publication of "The Modern World Series" edited by the Right Hon'ble Fisher is possible in England, we do not know why the conception and writing of a true and authentic history of India like the one suggested will not be possible in India. Such a well-balanced historical survey of the culture and civilisation of India would be indispensable to all serious students of universal history and will be hailed with delight and patronised by all patriotic Indians. The cost of such a work is immense indeed, but yet there is enough wealth in India for such a noble venture. Nothing can be more patriotic and more authentic than such an impartial work. It will command respect in the world, clear many false notions, mis-

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conceptions and misunderstandings, and prepare the way for India's rightful recognition by the world.

## INDIAN EDUCATION, PAST AND FUTURE

BY SIR BRAJENDRANATH SEAL, Kt., M.A., Ph.D., D.SC.

The soul of India has through the ages gone on creating a synthetic culture, in which nature and man have been comrades, all sentience has had its kinship recognised with reverence and homage, and the group or communal consciousness has been the nursery and school of the individual conscience. The essential stamp of the Genius of India is seen in many features of this indigenous education—in the out-door or open-air study in intimate touch with nature, in a corporate life or residence which weans the young from the home for initiation into the greater family of the academic corporation, in long and leisurely years of scholastic study, and above all, in the rule of Brahmacharya, the rule of the student life comprising three great vows, the vow of chastity, the vow of poverty, and the vow of labour. The vow of Brahmacharya embraced not only abstinence from luxury and from all impure excitements, not only temperance in mind and body and speech, but also the obligation of Rita, the truth. The vow of poverty abjured all covetousness and money-getting so that the private purse of the student, prince or beggar that he might be, was cut down to the barest minimum. The vow of labour imposed on the Vidyarthi, the seeker of knowledge, menial duties for the Gurugriha and the student brotherhood, not omitting building and household economy and conservancy, and made honourable even begging for the maintenance of the Gurukula. The educational ideal was two-fold in character: in an individual reference it was Atma-vidya, or Brahma-vidya, the knowledge of the Self, or the vision of the Absolute as the Self, the ultimate goal

to which every soul must press forward in the cycle of births and rebirths ; in a communal reference it was the conservation and transmission of the tradition of culture and learning, of the arts and sciences, from generation to generation, a debt which the individual owes and must repay to the Rishis, the Fathers of the Race.

One characteristic mark of the educational organisation was this :—education was organised as an integral element in a man's social status. The social and communal (village) systems on which the educational organisation was based ordained a practically free and compulsory higher education for the Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya classes, and a well-nigh universal primary education for the village communities. This social and communal status not only socialised education, it ensured that the theoretical instruction, whether elementary or higher, was supplemented by vocational training in and through the Upavedas, and later on, through the Vidyas and Kalas (sciences and arts),—though there was a retrogression in the latter-day Chatuspathis and tols.

In the mediæval tols, the curriculum was narrowed down, and there grew up special schools for literature, grammar, law, Nyaya, Vedanta, medicine, mythology, Tantric rituals, etc. Lexicology, grammar and the elements of Belles Lettres and Rhetoric were common to all the schools, and would be studied for a period varying from five to seven years or more. The specialisation would then begin. "Advanced literature (including grammar, lexicology, rhetoric, poetry and the drama) would take about five years, Logic, Metaphysics and Theology from ten to fifteen years, Law (the Smritis, the Sangrahas and the commentaries with elements of Mimamsa) ten years, Mythology (the Puranas) and Tantric Rituals, four years." The course of study often lasted, as Dr. Thomas noted, for twenty years, from the tenth to the thirtieth year.

The curriculum of study in the Arabic muktab would include Etymology, Syntax, Rhetoric and Logic in the first three or four years, and subsequent courses of (1) Litera-



ture (for three or four years), (2) Jurisprudence or Tradition (for five years or more), and (3) Logic, Natural Philosophy, Geometry, Algebra and Astronomy for five years or more.

Let us not superciliously dismiss these studies as 'learned lumber.' The Astronomy and Mathematics were not less advanced than those of Tycho Brahe, Cardan and Fermat ; the Anatomy was equal to that of Vesalius, the Hindu Logic and Methodology more advanced than that of Ramus, and equal to Bacon's ; the physico-chemical speculations on combustion, heat, chemical affinity, clearer, more rational, and more original than those of Van Helmont of Stahl ; and the Grammar, whether of Sanskrit or Prakrit, or of the Semitic tongues, the most scientific and comprehensive in the world before Bopp, Rask and Grimm.

Even in the dark first decade of the 19th century, after a hundred years or more of rapid decadence and decline, darkest India showed a fairly illumined chart of literacy, witness the census of 1815, witness also Munro's minute on indigenous education and Elphinstone's on the Dakshini grants of the Peshwas. Even in that *fin de siècle*, not less than 30 per cent of the boys were at school, and not less than 1 in 600 or thereabouts (as compared with Scotland's proud climax of 1 in 500 twenty-five years ago) were receiving in the tols and mukhtabs an advanced instruction in Grammar, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, in Logic, Law or Astronomy, in Therapeutics and Medicine, roughly corresponding to the University grade in our days. But when the new learning from the West installed itself, the gentry and the priestly classes disdained to pay court, and the figures show with great probability that of every hundred who had devoted themselves to the Higher Learning in Pre-British India, only 16 had betaken themselves to the New Learning by the end of the 19th century, *i.e.*, till so late as three decades ago, and the residue had diminished by 36 per cent. The total number of persons engaged in advanced studies had been actually diminished by a third. It is only since the advent of the

new movements of the Teaching University and the smaller regional University in the India of the last two decades that in the University grade of education our generation is beginning to push on to the point to which mediæval India had carried us before. But a school to every village is yet a far cry. The village communities of old organised such things better, for theirs was a growth from within.

Such was National education, the genuine Swadeshi commodity.

The Indian educational ideal to-day must be a living expression of this Indian mentality, a new construction of the Indian genius in response to the moving forces of the Time Spirit and Universal Humanity.

For historic continuity cannot be broken with impunity ; our statistics of illiteracy and village decadence and destitution bear witness to the results of violently upsetting an old historic organisation without heeding the principles of organic growth and adaptation to environment, a fatal blunder which Sir Henry Maine and Sir Alfred Lyall have alike deplored.

At the same time, we must march abreast with Universal Humanity and fall in a line with its serried ranks.

Fortunately, our Indian civilisation, amidst much that is crude and obsolete and destructive of healthy social tissues, has in its essentials been one of the great civilising forces of human history, as an age-long priest of Humanity and Culture to more than half the human race ; and in particular the Indian *educational* ideal and organisation, which was worked out in consonance with this civilising mission, had all the essential elements of progress, so that it is not for us a difficult task to reconcile the demands of the modern spirit, of modern ideals of education, with fidelity to the genius of India.

I will illustrate this in detail.

First, take the essentially modern idea that education is a form of community service just like conservancy and sanitation. The Indian village community also made it a

communal service, and the village schoolmaster was common as common land and common water. It is no wonder that so late as the end of the eighteenth century India gave England the first hint of elementary schools for the masses, for, as Macaulay's schoolboy knows, the Lancaster system was of Madras origin.

Or, again, take that distant vision of a free and universal secondary education, an idea which has travelled very far from the old English prejudice, now happily obsolete, that secondary and higher education was a luxury, and more or less the monopoly of the rich. The Hindu social system, as we have just seen, was based on a compulsory and practically free secondary or higher education for Dvija or twice-born classes (including, be it noted, merchants and traders) irrespective of wealth or social position, so that to the poor Dvija learning became his portion in life. What was however wrong with the old system was the blindness to the fact that every man is a Dvija, twice-born, being born once of Nature and once again of the Spirit.

Or again, take socialisation, that modern panacea for the evils of overweening individualism. I have already pointed out that in spite of the Hindu's individualistic concept of Moksha (liberation) and Atmavidya (self-realisation),— and even in this matter there was the struggling idea of Sarvamukti, the liberation of all creatures at the same time,— education itself was organised as an integral element in a man's social status (his Varna-shramadharma). With the Hindu, social solidarity was supreme ; Lokasthiti (social stability), Lokasangraha (social solidarity), Mahajana-pratyaya (social consensus), and Mahajana-sampradaya (social continuity), were stressed in the life of the individual as a member of society. But the equally essential element of social equality suffered, and accordingly when we orientate our University education in such a way as to illumine it with the light of social ideals, we must stress the ideals of social equality and social justice so as to redress the balance. Islamic culture exemplifies social equality, and latter-day

Hindu revivals have also been imbued with it as an ideal, probably from Islamic contacts.\*

## THE VEDANTA WORK IN AMERICA

### SUMMER CLASSES AT THE SHANTI ASHRAMA

During the month of June this year, Swami Prakasha-nanda held the summer Yoga classes at the Shanti Ashrama as usual. About twenty-five students availed themselves of the rare opportunity presented by such occasions. The great interest in the Vedanta teachings and specially in the practical spiritual living amidst the quiet and uplifting atmosphere of the Ashrama is obvious from the fact that students came from distant places, such as St. Louis and other cities situated thousands of miles away.

### ARRIVAL OF THE NEW SWAMIS

Owing to the sudden receipt of the cable message from Honolulu regarding the expected arrival of Swami Paramananda with Swamis Dayananda and Akhilananda in San Francisco by the middle of June, Swami Prakasha-nanda sent for Swami Prabhavananda from the Portland Center to greet the Swamis and welcome them at the Temple. Accordingly Swami Prabhavananda, accompanied by Dr. Herman Kronenberg, the President of the Society and Mr. E. C. Brown, one of the Board of Directors, greeted the Swamis at the dock upon their arrival per S. S. Taiyo Maru on the 18th of June. Then they were all taken to the Temple and received there with cordial welcome and duly entertained with Hindu dinner and refreshments. Swami Paramananda left the same evening for Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta with Swami Akhilananda, who is going to assist him in his ever-growing work in Boston and Southern California.

\* Extracts from the Convocation Address delivered by Dr. Seal to the University of Bombay in August last.

## RECEPTION TO THE SWAMIS.

On Sunday, June 20th, during the morning service at the Temple, Swami Prabhavananda formally presented Swami Dayananda to the public, who has been specially sent from India to help Swami Prakashananda in the work at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco and the Pacific coast. Dr. Herman Kronenberg, Mr. A. S. Wollberg and Mrs. Clara M. Pettee welcomed the Swami with suitable speeches on behalf of the Society. In response to the cordial welcome, Swami Dayananda spoke in part :—

“Please allow me to convey to you my sincere and heart-felt thanks for the warm and cordial welcome you have accorded to me this morning. This is my first trip to America, the land of freedom and opportunities, and I am pleased to meet you all. Wherever we may be situated, we are all children of God, and it is a pleasure to come in contact with His children in different parts of the globe and profit by each other’s experience.

“Peace and blessedness is the goal of mankind. It is the goal of the East as well as the goal of the West. But how is the West trying to realize that goal? By conquering nature. True it is that man is born to conquer nature but by nature the West understands external nature only—control over the elements, control over land, water and sky. It has made wonderful discoveries in the domain of science and believes that true happiness consists in the machines. But is it really true? I ask you to pause and think if you are really happy with all your machines and scientific discoveries. Of course not. Machines can never make mankind happy. They are necessary to a certain extent but we must not depend too much upon them—we must not make them the be-all and end-all of our life. The be-all and end-all of our life is the realization of the Atman, the Spirit within, which is the mine of infinite bliss and happiness. And this is obtained by controlling the mind, the internal nature alone. This control of internal nature, the realization of the Atman—is the ideal of India, the mother of all that is noble, moral

and spiritual. And this the West must learn from the East if it really wants peace and happiness."

On the same day, a large number assembled at Ananda-Ashrama to attend the services, expressing in this way their joy at the return of Swami Paramananda. On Tuesday an impromptu reception at the Ashrama Community-House gave the Swami opportunity to greet his friends in a more informal way and to present to them Swami Akhilananda who expressed his appreciation of the warm welcome accorded to him, in sincere, earnest words which immediately won sympathetic response.

#### AT BOSTON AND LA CRESCENTA

Swami Paramananda could not however long stay at Ananda-Ashrama, for he started on the 29th June for Boston, Cincinnati and other places in the east. In his absence, Swami Akhilananda conducted the Thursday night and the Sunday evening classes and Sister Daya the Tuesday evening and Sunday morning classes. On Swami Paramananda's return, the summer school has begun in the Ananda-Ashrama. Many have come and are living in the Ashrama itself to benefit by the Swamis' company and discourses and the holy atmosphere of the place.

#### CLASSES AND SUNDAY LECTURES AT THE HINDU TEMPLE

During the absence of Swami Prakashananda in June, Mr. E. B. Brown conducted the first two Sunday services at the Temple, his topics being "Conquest of Fear" and "Who deserves Immortality." A large and appreciative congregation greeted Swami Prabhavananda, who conducted the last two Sunday services, his subjects being "Fullness of Life" and "Reincarnation and Immortality."

Since Swami Prakashananda's return from the Shanti Ashrama at the end of June, Swami Dayananda commenced giving discourses on the Bhagavad Gita every Tuesday evening.

Swami Dayananda, by his sweet quiet disposition and amiable character, has already won the hearts of the

members of the Society and Swami Prakashananda is very much pleased to have him as his assistant and cherishes great hope of extending the scope and sphere of work as occasions demand and opportunities present themselves.

## NEWS AND NOTES

### AGASTYA, THE HINDU MISSIONARY OF ANCIENT INDIA

In order to maintain life it is as necessary to draw blood into the lungs as to pump it out for proper circulation in the body. It is as true literally and figuratively of an individual as of a nation. If a nation is to live, it should not only accumulate power by steadfast adherence to its ancient ideals, but must also go out with zeal and enthusiasm to propagate them to the larger world, and thus make its life flow in eternal freshness and vigour.

From time immemorial ours has been a spiritual ideal and our national leaders who were Seers of Truth, not only lived up to it but also propagated it among other nations. Urged by missionary zeal they travelled far and wide, teaching and preaching as they went and thus shared the *Amrita*, the nectar, of divine wisdom they had realised, with all and sundry. Our mythology is replete with stories of such missionaries. It cannot be denied that there is much truth hidden in these legends, especially when such accounts are supported by inscriptional and other reliable evidences. Such is the account of the Rishi Agastya. Mr. O. C. Ganguli contributes an article to the *Rupam* (reproduced in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, July), in which he discusses Agastya as an ancient Hindu coloniser. Agastya belonged to the temple of Shiva in Kashi and was a staunch devotee of the deity. With a view to propagate religion he set out on a travel and after crossing the Vindhya range reached the South. There he reclaimed the primeval forests and made them fit for human habitation. In the *Aranya-Kânda* xi—81

of the *Râmâyana* we read: *He who having vanquished the deadly Asuras, by his many beneficent acts, made the southern region accessible and habitable, for the good of the people.* The same reference is also seen in the *Lankâ-Kânda*, cxvii, 13—14. He established many an ashrama, and vanquished among many demons Ilvala and Vâtâpi whose names are handed down to us in the modern place-names of Aipole and Badami.

The advent of this Aryan sage to the South marked a turning-point in its history. He not only preached there the highest religious doctrines of the North, but also enlightened the people in many branches of secular knowledge. He was the spiritual preceptor of many South Indian princes, especially of the Pândyan princes. He is said to be the first to introduce the worship of Shiva and the Science of Medicine among the Southerners. He invented the Tamil language and systematised Dravidian alphabet and grammar,—his grammar being known as *Agothiam*. He is further reputed to have been the author of a treatise on image-making. In this way he bore to the South the torch of learning and culture and made it perfectly civilised.

But the field of activity of this intrepid Hindu missionary was not confined within the limits of India but extended even beyond the seas. Agastya, it is said, drank off through his psychic powers all the waters of the sea which offered obstructions to his oversea activities, and went over to the far East to preach Hinduism. From inscriptional evidence we find that, among different places, he sojourned in the distant Cambodia. The following is from a fragmentary inscription at Ankor-Vat in Cambodia, which refers to the first part of his activities there. "*That Brahmin, Agastya, born in the land of the Aryans, devoted to the worship of Shiva, having come by his psychic power to the land of the Cambodians for the purpose of worshipping the Shiva-lingam known as Sri Bhadreswara, and having worshipped the god for a long time, attained beatitude.*" He also founded a royal dynasty there and erected many magnificent temples for the deity of his



worship. All these undoubtedly signalise his presence in the far East.

But that was not all. The untiring energy of our hero was not yet wholly exhausted. He, it is said in *Vāyu-Purāna*, also visited the following islands in the Indian Ocean: *Barhina-dwipa* (perhaps Borneo), *Kusha-dwipa*, *Varāha-dwipa*, *Shāṅkha-dwipa* (which may be one or other of the Sunda islands).

Thus Agastya is credited with carrying, in the face of dangers and difficulties, the torch of Aryan culture to dark and distant lands. The seeds of Aryan thought sown in those lands must have been the beginning of the efflorescence of a fully developed Brahminic culture.

It is true that much of what we know of Agastya and his activities partakes of the nature of a myth. But inscriptions, sculptures, traditions—all confer an amount of reality on it which cannot be easily ignored. It may be that the Agastya who is mentioned in Indian, Cambodian and Javanese traditions and inscriptions, is not one single person, but really typifies the host of the first colonisers. Or it is more probable that many of those early colonisers belonged to the clan of Agastya. That Agastya established an *Agastya-gotra* is known from the *Asvalāyana Grihya-Sutra* and also indirectly from an inscription discovered in South Kodoe.

#### SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

The birthday anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and the founder of the Math and Mission Branch and of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Madras, came off on the 6th August last and was duly celebrated by the members of the Madras Math and Students' Home and by the Swami's friends, admirers and disciples.

The members of the Math as well as the boys of the Residential and Industrial Schools of the Students' Home spent the whole day in worship and song. And in the evening they and devotees assembled in a meeting to discourse on the Swami's life and work.

The speakers dwelt on the various aspects of his life. "The Swami was a living embodiment of the ideal of *Guru-bhakti*. Though a great Jnâni, he always held that Bhakti was Jnâna crystallised. . . . His frame would shrink to touch money. After a class, his students had to tie the carriage fare in a corner of his cloth and the gharri-walla had to take it from there after bringing him at the Math. He looked upon all women as incarnations of the Divine Mother. . . . Such was his devotion that in the hot season, he would daily spend hours in fanning the picture of Sri Ramakrishna, which to him was no mere picture but a living presence. Once, while he was living in an outhouse in the Ice House compound at Triplicane, the rains came through the roof at night and lest it should disturb his Guru's sleep he sat watching the whole night, holding an umbrella over the picture."

Swami Yatiswarananda, president of the Math, said in course of his speech : "Personally I had not the privilege of sitting at his feet. Yet, soon after my joining the Order, when I came to Madras, I felt his presence guiding and shaping me at every point. That he is still with us, those who have eyes to see will see. As I think of him, his life comes before me in pictures. Two boys, Sasi and Sarat, came one day to Sri Ramakrishna. They were cousins. While talking to them he said, 'My boys, if tiles and bricks are burnt with a name impressed on them, they retain the name for ever ; in the same way, if young men become spiritual early, they will retain the impression through life.' Then he told the boys about the evil of early marriage, when Sasi asked if marriage was against religious life ; Sri Ramakrishna fetched a Bible and asked Sasi to read the portion where Jesus says, 'Let men be eunuchs for the Kingdom of God.' Sasi paid many visits after this and was soon transformed. He resolved to dedicate his life to his Guru. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, most of the disciples were swayed by the ideals of meditation and study, and for twelve years day after day through

turmoil and suffering in the Baranagore Math, it was he who knit the other disciples together and served them all with the love of a mother. As Swami Vivekananda has said, he was the pillar of the Math and but for him the Order of Sri Ramakrishna would have been impossible. When the Madrasees asked Swami Vivekananda for a Sadhu to work in South India, Swamiji said, 'I am going to send you one who is more orthodox than most of you,' and his choice fell on Sasi. He remained in Madras for fourteen years, and what his presence meant to those who came in contact with him, and what an amount of good his influence has created, it is needless for me to say."

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK AT MIDNAPORE.

From the reports of the workers of the Mission, it is apprehended that with the subsidence of the flood waters, the condition of the flood-stricken people will be more serious than what it is at present: there will be an extensive outbreak of famine and epidemic. The whole of the autumnal crop has been ruined and the people have to wait for a long time for the next one. During this period they must be helped with food and clothes, and monetary grants for building their huts. For this extensive and long-continued relief operation, thousands of rupees, rice, fodder and clothes are required. The Mission is now working at Chandipur, Itabheria and Totanala and has closed its Nedhrya Centre where no more help is thought necessary at present, for, water has totally subsided and people are getting work in the fields. The weekly expense of the Mission is Rs. 2,000. Though the Mission is daily receiving telegrams for help from many places, it is unable to extend its sphere of work on account of want of funds. We earnestly hope that immediate help will come from the kind-hearted public for succouring the distress of these helpless persons. Contributions to be sent to the following addresses: (1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah. (2) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत !

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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VOL. XXXI.] DECEMBER, 1926. [No. 12

## NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH THE HOLY MOTHER

[These notes, taken from the diary of a disciple as published in the Bengali monthly, *Udbodhan*, derive their value from the simplicity and directness with which many aspects of practical religion are herein touched upon and illuminated. To those of us who had the special privilege of knowing her, these words have an extreme spiritual value and significance, as those of one who was considered as the first and the greatest disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and possessed of immeasurable spiritual power and wisdom, may well claim to have. We hope to present our readers further instalments of these invaluable records in the future issues of P.B.]

I asked the Mother, "Mother, how shall I live my life?"

She replied, "As you are doing now. Ever pray to Him yearningly in constant recollection and contemplation of Him."

"Mother, I am frightened at the sight of even great souls—Mahapurushas—slipping from the Ideal."

"If one lives amidst objects of enjoyment, they naturally come to one. Do not cast your eyes even on a wooden representation of a woman or ever go near it."

"But, Mother, is it not true that it is God who actuates man to every action?"

"Yes, it is true. But is man conscious of it? He thinks in his blind infatuation that he is the original doer.—He does not rely on God. Whoever surrenders himself to God is saved. A Sadhu must always be extremely alert. His path is very slippery, and a slippery path has to be trod with exceedingly careful steps. Is it a fun to be a Sannyasin? He must not even look at a woman, and when he walks the street, his eyes should be fixed on his big toes. Just as the collar of a dog saves it from being killed as a street dog, even so does the ochre-robe of a Sannyasin save him from harm. His is the royal road and every one makes way for him.

"The mind naturally tends to evil : it is disinclined to good deeds. It was my habit to rise early in the morning and meditate. But once I failed to get up so early through indisposition. And such is the natural indolence of the mind that for several days I was late in rising. Therefore you must be up and doing if you want to achieve anything good and great. When during my stay in the *Nahacat*\* at Dakshineswar, I would see the silver moon reflected in the calm waters of the Ganges. I would tearfully pray to God: 'O Lord, even in the moon there are stains. May my mind be absolutely spotless!'

"You were a Calcutta boy, you could easily live a comfortable married life. But you have given up everything. Why should your mind revert to its thought?"

"Mother, is the practice of *Pranayama* and *Asana*† beneficial?"

\* It was a room intended for the temple music. The Holy Mother used to occupy it while staying in the Temple.

† Particular postures

"The practice of them brings one occult powers and occult powers lead one astray."

"Should a Sadhu travel in the holy places?"

"Why should he, if he feels calm and peaceful in one fixed place?"

"Mother, I scarcely have concentration of mind. Graciously awaken my *Kundalini*."\*

"Rest assured She will wake up. A little of *japa* and meditation will rouse Her. Of course She will not awake of Herself. You must practise *Sadhana*. Practise meditation and by and by your mind will be so calm and fixed that you will find it hard to keep away from meditation. But meditation should not be forcibly practised. On the day when you find it hard to meditate, end by making your salutations to the Lord. On other days, meditation will come smooth and easy."

\* \* \* \*

"Mother, how is it I cannot calm and concentrate my mind? I find it ruffled by various thoughts during meditation."

"Of course it is bad if the mind thinks of money, wife or children. But the thought of one's work is natural. If you cannot meditate, repeat the Name. *Japat Siddhi* — 'Realisation will come through the repetition of the Name.' Yes, *japa* will eventually bring spiritual realisation. It is good if you can meditate, but you need not do it forcibly."

\* \* \* \*

"Mother, shall I practise *Sadhana* living in the Benares Math, or retire for the purpose to a solitary place? Which is better?"

"Practise *Sadhana* for some time in some solitary place like *Hrishikesh*. This will so strengthen your mind that in whatever place or company you may keep it afterwards, it will remain unaffected. A small plant has

\* *Kundalini* 'coiled up' The dormant spiritual power is so called.

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 to be hedged round against cows or goats. A grown plant has no fear from them. Whenever you feel your mind is beset with undesirable thoughts and desires for knowledge, pray to Him earnestly,—He will purify your mind and answer your enquiries."

"Mother, I feel I am powerless. I have taken shelter in you. Do what you like with me."

(*Folding her hands in a prayer*) May He protect your vow of Sannyasa! Never fear, He is ever looking after you. Do His work and practise Sadhana. A little daily work drives away idle thoughts from the mind. A solitary and inactive life is possible to be beset with idle thinking."

"Where and how shall I practise Sadhana?"

"Benares is the place for you. Sadhana means concentrating the mind on God and plunging it deeper and deeper in His thought. Repeat His Name."

"Is it any use merely repeating His name, if I do not love Him?"

"Your cloth will get wet if you fall into water, either willingly or unwillingly. Constantly practise meditation. Your mind is 'unripe'—unsteady—now. But constant meditation will make it steady and calm. And always discriminate. Whenever the mind goes after anything other than God, consider it as transient and surrender the mind at the sacred feet of the Lord. Be like the man who, while angling for fish, became so absorbed in it that he did not hear the least of the din and bustle of a marriage procession passing by."

"What is the aim of life?"

"To realise God and to be absorbed uninterruptedly in His consciousness, is the aim. You are a monk, you are His own man. He is taking care of your present and future. Why should you worry? One cannot of course think of God constantly. Therefore sometimes take a walk, at other times meditate."

## A NATION ADRIFT

The year is coming to an end. But the passing year holds out no hope for the nation. The situation is decidedly gloomier and more complex than before. The nation seems to be adrift. The sky is just now filled with the angry tumults of communal battles and the ugly clamours of electioneering. And only a very stout optimism can discover in them auspicious omens of the future.

Communalism and council-work,—are these the foundation on which we are going to build our future? We are not blind to the constructive work that is being variously carried on in the country. There are movements for uplifting the untouchables. There are a few national schools and colleges. There are indigenous industrial enterprises,—there is the *Khadi* and *Charkha* movement. And there are of course literary and artistic revivals in some of the provinces. These are no doubt contributing to a certain extent towards national self-realisation. But more is wanted and more organised movements, and above all the consciousness, spread throughout the country, of the purpose for which the nation lives, that our every action and movement may be real and truly guided. But what are the real conditions? Constructional works are only spasmodic and unrelated, often devoid of correct bearings on the collective whole and not yet imbued with the consciousness of their true place in the scheme of the nationhood. And those activities in which the country seems most interested are really no part, or only a very inessential part, of the national being.

The political aspect of nationalism has hopelessly infatuated us. We are seeking national salvation essentially through political movements. We are unduly emphasising the political aspect of the national struggle, and all problems and functions of the collective life are



being interpreted in terms of politics, with the consequence that, taken out of the calm atmosphere in which only they are truly comprehended and solved, they have assumed ugly and dangerous proportions. For instance, the communal problem. The political aspect of it is really the most insignificant. It is essentially social and cultural. But social and cultural problems cannot be solved by pacts and conferences. They can be solved by creating the correct atmosphere of unity, refinement and sympathy, by a deep comprehension of the underlying facts of history, sociology and religion involved, and not by harangues and recriminations. The process of solution can but be slow. But unfortunately the short-sided and hasty policy of the political leaders has made it a political question *par excellence*. And now the atmosphere about it is charged with too much heat to be easily and delicately handled. It ought never to be interfered with by politicians. It should be left to social reformers and religious leaders, to those who have made of themselves and their religions a harmony of the ideals of the contending communities.

Similarly, educational problems should be tackled by educationists alone and should not be made fashionable pendants by politicians to their programmes. The true progress of Indian education lies in the coalition of the various educational activities within India, informed with spiritual idealism. The industrial reconstruction in the same way should be left to expert economists and sociologists and not to politicians developing promiscuous economic policies to serve the passing purposes of diplomacy. And thus every other national function in conformity with the national genius.

We suggest that every sphere of life has its laws of function and growth. We cannot override them without obstructing its development and ultimately that of national welfare. Let us therefore organise every sphere separately, without any artificial regard for the political ideal. It may be asked, what, if all the spheres are separately organised, should the cementing factor, the

underlying unity be? The principle of synthesis will of course be the realisation of the national ideal. India has a fixed spiritual ideal and fixed laws governing her society, economics and politics in unison with it. This dynamic spiritual ideal is the unifying principle relating the different spheres of her collective life. The consciousness of the common ideal and the desire to realise it will inspire the different planes of national activity with a unitary purposiveness. What is being sought to be done through politics, we want to do through religion. We want spirituality, not politics, to govern the life of the nation.

The present tendencies however go counter to the requirements of national well-being. The birth of political movements in India is to a certain extent a reaction against, but to a greater extent a result of, the impact of Western civilisation on India. The Congress was created and run by Westerners and Western-educated Indians who were innocent of a proper knowledge of the Indian culture. The ideal held up by the Congress was, and still is, the realisation of a state, pre-eminently political, after the Western model, centralising and governing all the functions of the collective life. We did not ask whether such a state-ideal was intrinsically sound and wholesome, or true to the experience and genius of India. We ran madly after this glittering prize and cried to all and sundry to join us in this noble race. But the tumult of this joyous race has eventually roused many demons from their slumbers, and, released from their fetters, they are now overrunning this unhappy land.

The most urgent question before the country now is of the choice between politics and spirituality as the centre of the national life. What is wanted is a clear formulation of the concept of the future Indian state. Is it to be a replica of the Western political state, that is to say, are we to organise ourselves into a nation of aggressive exploiters, hungering for other peoples' lands and robbing weaker nations of their prosperity and freedom,

building monstrous armies, navies, air forces and diplomatic corps and preparing the nationals as zealous supporters of the state policy? For, euphemism apart, a Western state is doing all these, and it cannot redeem itself and rise to ethical levels without changing its very outlook and constitution and deliberately making spiritual uplift its governing ideal. Or is it to be a state whose function will be limited to externals only, which will look after the material necessities of the nation, its administration and defence, but leave all essentials, such as education, social economy and religion, to the collective wisdom of the people? It is on the nature of our choice that the character and ideal of national reconstruction and struggle depend. We hold that the latter has been the governing ideal of India's collective life from time immemorial. Political dominions have come and gone leaving little mark on the real life of the people, which has been growing and developing according to its own laws with its leaders of Incarnations and prophets, sages and philosophers. Let us shake off the fond delusion that we are devoid of the organisational principle in our collective life and have to borrow it from the West. We had it intensely alive and active through millenniums and we have it still, would we but look for it. Are we to discard it now in favour of a doubtful foreign import?

It must be remembered that human nature is the same in all times and lands. It has its laws and processes of fulfilment. Man is essentially a spiritual being. In the realisation of this his essential and eternal nature lies his permanent satisfaction and final peace. This is the end towards which all his efforts are tending consciously or unconsciously. The duty and utility of a state or nation lie in speeding him on his onward path and clearing it of all obstacles. If a state replaces this high ideal by a lower one, it not only creates a clash of duties and ideals in the individual, but also cripples itself by dwarfing the spiritual growth of its citizens. The troubles witnessed in the West to-day, or for the matter of that, in the whole world, are ultimately traceable to this internal conflict that

the political scheme of life has created. There is no domestic, social or religious peace. It is one long story of conflict, conflict *ad infinitum* in all planes of life. It is idle to plead that the political bias of the state need not affect the individual spiritual ideals of the nationals. They are constrained to uphold the state with their mental, moral and physical support, and this makes a tremendous difference. It is a vicious circle in which they are caught. Their own greed being organised upholds the state and the state pushes them on in the downward path of moral ruin.

It is true India also was not absolutely free from this evil. But here the evil was sought to be minimised. Exploitation or aggression was discouraged. India never went out to conquer a foreign land. When she went out, she did so to extend her cultural dominion through loving service and sympathetic understanding. That noble idealism has not yet forsaken her. It is slowly asserting itself even in the uncongenial atmosphere of politics. For, what was the non-co-operation movement, if not a harking back from the lure of the foreign ideal to our own spiritual ideal? The influence of Mahatma Gandhi transformed the nature of Indian politics. His doctrine of Satyagraha was a reapplication of the age-old Indian ideal to the work of national reconstruction. But even he was not free from the taint of politics, he also believed in expediency. His gaze was not always fixed on the high pedestal of Heaven but strayed sometimes to a group of persons who seem to hold the fate of India in their hands. His worship sought for signs from On High in the changed mentality of the white bureaucracy. But we can either follow God or man, there is no midway. And therefore, as it happens when men seek the fruits of their efforts from other men, his movement failed to be truly disinterested and spiritual and was as much given to hope and despair, jealousy and hatred as any other political movement.

The two streams of political expediency and spiritual

idealism are flowing on in our national movements, often side by side but sometimes crossing each other. On which of them shall we float our boat? The choice need not and indeed cannot be arbitrary. One thing is clear,—our past must have a determining voice in this choice.

There are two ways in which the worth and efficiency of our national policy can and should be judged. Firstly, it must not clash with the individual ideal which is of course purely spiritual and unalterable. Secondly, it must be potent enough to endow the nation with all-round prosperity, by revivifying all its functions. The idea of prosperity however must not be identified with actual earthly profits gained but with the infusion of strength—physical, mental and spiritual—into the nation. For earthly things may often be speedily gained through unrighteousness. But as the books say, "Through unrighteousness they prosper, they find benefits, they conquer their enemies, but they perish at the root."

Between the two policies that are guiding our national activities, to which we have referred, the choice can safely be made by applying the fore-mentioned tests. The first policy, that of political expediency, manifestly clashes with the individual ideal. That ideal is *Mukti* or spiritualisation of life. Not only is the knowledge of, and union with, God posited as the one inevitable end towards which man must and does travel, but his whole life with its unavoidable multiplicity of action and experience has been sought to be spiritualised or deified. He is guided in all his actions by *Dharma*. And *Dharma* demands that his thoughts and actions should conform to moral and spiritual principles. There is only one cause of all things, God. He is the one driving force in life, and every detail of life should be understood in relation to Him. Our duties to the nation are not an exception. They also should be conceived as a part of *Dharma*. Our service to the people must be a service of God Himself. The policy of expediency clashes with this idea. It is a clash of outlooks and therefore fundamental. It does not trace the chain of causes further than men. Consequently

it compels the human causes to yield its desires. And when men ascribe their miseries to other men, they are scarcely overscrupulous in their methods of coercion. It relies almost wholly on diplomacy and scarcely on moral principles. It does not believe in the moral vindication in the affairs of men, and is thus diametrically opposed to spiritual idealism. If therefore the conflict between individual and national ideals is to be eliminated, the national struggle must be conceived as pre-eminently a movement for spiritual uplift.

Regarding the second test, it is enough if we remember that the Spirit is the source and mine of all strength and that in India religion has been the pivot round which national activity has always moved. We are aware that many critical darts are often levelled against religion as one of the primary causes of India's ruin. There are some, again, who would throw spiritual idealism into the scrap-heap in favour of industrialism and of what they call the economic interpretation of life. We need not waste our ink on them. For good or for evil, religion is too deeply ingrained in our national being to be summarily discarded, and we *must* interpret and reconstruct life from the spiritual view-point or disintegrate and die. Our "economic" prophets seem to think that the only realities are those which feel hard to the touch and can be measured and weighed. They forget that idealism is the hardest of facts in the world of men. Is not the history of men the history of the triumph of spirit over the so-called realities? Besides it is a stupendous error to think that material prosperity is impossible without offering our all at the feet of mammon. We can realise political and economic prosperity even without organising our earth-hunger, greed of gold, hatred and jealousy. Let us organise the best aspirations of our soul, let us stimulate our progress towards spiritual self-realisation. *This spiritual struggle will generate a power which will be able to meet all situations squarely in the face, be they political, economical, social or religious.* Those who criticise religion as incapable of fructifying all fields of life, know

little of religion. "A little of that religion conquers great fear." For religion is strength. None is spiritual if he is not strong. The first expression of religion is tremendous *rajas*. Religion makes one healthy, active, alert, keen, strong, fearless, selfless and noble. Not from *tamas*, dullness and torpor, can one go direct to the peace and light of *sattva*. One *must* pass through the intermediate stage of *rajas*, tremendous activity. This is religion which, if sincerely practised, will generate a power the immense magnitude of which will astonish mankind.

In fact, our choice can only be religion. Politics is not for us. Let us give up the foolishness of denying our past, and organise ourselves on the spiritual basis. We have already indicated the lines along which national work should be carried,—the separate organisation of each department. But all these departments as well as every individual must have one purpose in view, the realisation of the spiritual ideal. What exactly is being done in relation to politics, will have to be done in relation to spirituality. Let us deluge the country with spiritual ideas, that is the first and the *greatest* step towards national regeneration. All other things will follow of course. For, when people have awakened to the consciousness of their spiritual integrity, inertia and confusion will fly off, and each man will set himself to his work in a worshipful spirit, and service of the nation will appear as service of God, for there is no country without God and except in the heart of God.

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## LIFTING THE VEIL

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

The Kena Upanishad begins with a very significant question :

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः । केनेषिता वाचसिमा  
बहन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क च देवो युनक्ति ॥

“By whom desired and set forth does the mind flow towards its object? At whose bidding again does the chief Prana proceed to its functions? By whom wished do men utter the speech? What effulgent one, indeed, directs the eye or the ear?”

We generally ignore this question amidst the din and turmoil of our daily life. Our mind is raising constant storms in us. It holds up sometimes alluring pictures before us, and sometimes wears very gloomy looks. We feel at one time completely shattered by adversities and at another time highly elated. We are thus eternally at the mercy of the whims and freaks of our mind. We are verily its bondmen. We do not enquire if there is any one at the back of the mind exerting a regulating influence over it. Our eyes, ears and other senses are also most capriciously running after different objects, and most terrible sufferings are the consequence. It is true they apparently bring us occasional pleasure, but it needs little thought and experience to know how false and fleeting it is. And through the conspiracy of the mind and the senses, we are held back from asking ourselves the all-important question, Who is he that guides the senses? Do they obey any laws? Have they any master over them?

We are most of us given to superficial living. We do not know why we cannot dive deep into the heart of these momentous problems and wring therefrom the supreme remedy of our life's troubles. If life is all joy,



we can know it by going to the very source of it and drink deep of that fountainhead. If life is really and essentially miserable, a deep and inmost enquiry alone can find out the cause of the misery and eventually root it out. But somehow we do not feel inclined to take up this quest. We do not seem to want that 'golden wand' the touch of which will awaken 'the sleeping princess.' Ours is on the other hand the seemingly eternal chase after the will-o'-the-wisp of sense-joy, unreasoned and foolish, and deathly terrible.

But the Upanishad has given the answer :

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचा ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणश्चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य  
धीराः पेत्यान्मालोलादसता भवन्ति ॥

"He is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, He is also the Prana of the Prana, the eye of the eye. Knowing thus, the wise, having relinquished all false identification of the self with the senses, become immortal, when departed from this world."

न तच्च चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग्गच्छति न मनो न विद्या न विजानीमी यथैतदनु-  
श्रियात् । अन्यदेव तद्विदितादयो अविदितादधि इति शुश्रूषन् पूर्वेणा ये नस्त-  
द्वाचचक्षिरे ॥

"There goes neither the eye, nor speech, nor mind ; we know it not ; nor do we see how to teach one about It. Different It is from all that are known, and is beyond the unknown as well,—thus we have heard from the ancient seers who explained That to us."

Here is the clue to how our senses are guided and the mind is controlled, as well as to the remedy against their oppression on us. There is One within us who directs the senses, commands the mind and is the regulator of our intellect. When we realise this fact and realise Him, all our sufferings vanish and our imperfections are made whole, and we are made one with the Life Divine. Our everyday life gives us little opportunity to solve this question, for we ever identify ourselves with our senses and the mind,—to go beyond them is to negate the world itself—and subject ourselves to their mercies and suffer.

We think we are a bundle of limbs and organs and are extremely anxious to save and protect them. Through these limbs and organs we relate ourselves to other bundles of limbs and organs and share their suffering. Life is robbed of all peace and calm and we gasp for a breath of relief. Yet we do not know nor do we care to know that what we call our *self* is but the shadow of the *Real Self* who is hidden from us with all His glory and blessedness through ignorance.

He is beyond knowledge—the ordinary knowledge, He cannot be known. Because He is infinite and cannot be grasped by our finite nature. We see all things with our eyes, but because it is He who is the power behind the eyes, we cannot see Him. “How can you know the knower?” We hear with our ears, but since it is He who is the power behind hearing, we cannot hear Him. In the same way, we cannot smell Him, because the power of smell comes from Him. Words cannot express Him, because the power of speech comes from Him. The mind cannot encompass Him, because He is the sustainer of the mind. The senses and the mind are like the puppets in a puppet-play, moved and directed by His invisible hand. This is the mystery of existence. Without His substance and light, this world of ours would have been lost in nothingness, and even ordinary knowledge would have been impossible ; and yet all these cannot even faintly express Him. As Sri Ramakrishna’s homely illustration explains, He is like a policeman with a bull’s-eye lantern on his night watch. His lantern lights up other things but not himself. So we may pursue the reflected light of God in the world through eternity but shall never come to its original—the Transcendent Effulgence. Well has the Upanishad said :

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्यतो भानि कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव  
भान्तमगुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

“The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor this lightning, and much less this fire.

He shining, everything else shines, by His light all this is lighted." His is all light that we see in the universe, external and internal. But none of them can show His Inscrutable Face !

Therefore it is said,—Whoever says he has known Brahman knows Him not. But Brahman is truly comprehended by him who knows Him as incomprehensible. Brahman is ever "unknown" to the wise. It is only the self-conceited ignorant who say that they have known Him. Brahman cannot be known in the ordinary sense of the word *knowledge*. He is not to be known objectively. He is to be realised subjectively, as the soul of our soul, the life of our life. We really know Him only when we know Him as the perceiver of all objects. When we have known Him thus, we no longer have a separate existence from Him or any consciousness of separateness. And we cannot then speak of Him in an objective sense. A salt doll went to measure the saline waters of the ocean ; but before it had gone far into the waters, it melted and became one with them. "To know Brahman is to become Brahman."

The light of our life is a reflection of God's light, but in our ignorance we claim it as our own. We go about our business in the world, and when we succeed, we say the success is ours, we have achieved it by our own labour and effort, scarcely thinking that the power to work and succeed comes from God. But when failure overtakes us, we do not ascribe it to ourselves, but look for an invisible Power to lay the responsibility on and cry for His help. This is life, a weary tale of alternate smiles and tears. Yet we do not ask ourselves whom we really live by.

This is nicely explained in the Kena Upanishad by means of a parable. There was a great fight between the gods and the demons, in which the gods came out victorious. In the excess of their pride, they began to boast of their powers and greatness, little thinking that the glory of the victory belonged really to Brahman and

not to themselves. Brahman perceived their exultation and appeared before them in a strange form. Naturally the gods failed to recognise Him. They said to Fire, "You who know everything, go and find out who this strange being is." When Fire approached Him, He asked him, "Who are you?" "I am Fire," he replied. "What are your powers?" "I can burn all whatever there is on earth." "Burn this straw," and Brahman put a straw before him. Fire approached it with all his might, but could not burn it and went back hanging his head in shame. At this, Air went forward. "I am Air," he said, "I can take up all whatever there is on earth." But he could not move the little straw and went back ashamed. But when Indra came forward, Brahman revealed to him His secret, and the gods knew that it was the strength of Brahman, and not their own, that gave them victory over the demons.

In exactly the same way we fare in this world. We are easily puffed up by success and make a parade of it. Then comes failure to convince us of our littleness. To some the world goes easy, they may deny the existence of a Higher Power. But to others perhaps, everything goes wrong, they look in vain for an explanation of the odds of fortune. The fact is, the power behind both success and failure is Brahman Himself. Ignorance does not permit us to perceive it. A veil of delusion hides as it were the Shining Face of Brahman. Should we then cease to strive for anything? The question does not arise. For, whether we will or not, we shall *have* to be active till we have oned ourselves with Brahman. Until we have realised Him, there can be no peace or rest for us. The moral of the parable is not a stagnant fatalism. The parable exhorts us to cease to identify our self-consciousness with the mind and the senses and to identify it with the Real Self. It tell us to know the mind and the senses as they really are, dead and inert, made to look conscious and living by the reflected light of the Self.

इह चेदवेदौदय सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्मृज्यते विनाष्टिः । भूतेषु भूतेषु  
विचिता धीराः प्रेत्याख्यास्तौकादस्यता भवन्ति ॥

"If a man knows It here, then there is truth ; if he does not know It here, then there is the great destruction for him. The wise, having realised that Atman in all beings, become immortal, on departing from this world." We have to perceive Brahman in and behind every object and happening in the world. Only thus can we go beyond the great delusion. Till then, we shall have to fall victims to the unceasing round of births and deaths with their inherent and concomitant evils and sufferings.

How to realise Him? "Let the mind," says the Upanishad, "always go to Him, let the mind always remember Him." "Know Him alone,—the one and only Existence, give up all other thoughts." That is to say, deny the modifications of the mind and the senses and their objects. Turn your face from the shadow and look at the resplendent Sun. Well says the Upanishad :

"The mind is chiefly spoken of as of two kinds, pure and impure. The impure mind is that which is possessed of desire, and the pure is that which is devoid of desire.

"It is indeed the mind that is the cause of men's bondage and liberation. The mind that is attached to sense-objects leads to bondage, while, dissociated from sense-objects, it is held to be fit for liberation.

"Since liberation is predicated of the mind devoid of desire for sense-objects, therefore the mind should always be made free of such desire, by the seeker after liberation."

The mind is like a search-light thrown outwards bringing into the light of cognition the world of sense-joys. Let us turn it inwards and the great Inner Illumination shall be ours.

पराञ्च खानि व्यहसन् स्वयम्भूः सखात् पराङ् पश्यति नानरात्मन । कथिञ्चौरः  
प्रत्ययात्मानमेवदाहृतचक्षुरस्यतन्मिच्छन् ॥

"The self-existent God has rendered the senses so

defective that they go outwards, and hence man sees the external and not the internal self. Only perchance some wise man, desirous of immortality, turns his eyes inwards and beholds the inner Atman." Therefore *Nivritti*, renunciation, self-restraint and purity are the great helps towards the realisation of Brahman.

या वा एतामिव वेदापहृत्य पाप्मानमनन्ते स्वर्गं लोकं ज्यैष्ठ्ये प्रतितिष्ठति  
प्रतितिष्ठति ॥

"He, who knows this knowledge of Brahman, attains the highest heaven, having destroyed all evil." Brahman Himself is the highest heaven.

## THE PROSPECTS OF VEDANTA IN THE WEST

BY MADELINE RUTH HARDING

Like most other subjects the prospects of Vedanta in the West depend upon how it is presented to the people, and the *how* largely depends upon the people who present it. It is simplicity which people seem needing now in their religious life, something free of all unnecessary trimmings, a religion the power of which can be demonstrated in daily life by the overcoming of sin, sickness, and inharmony of every kind. But the foundation must be strong and absolutely clear, in the light of which all that comes into daily life can be examined.

Some years ago, when first interested in what is known as Christian Science, the writer asked that someone might come and give some enlightenment on certain difficulties in the way of its acceptance. Chief, perhaps, was the insistence that *all matter is illusion*. This is a difficult point when at first its acceptance is demanded of a would-be convert. But alas! the one who came to enlighten had no ability to explain, and the writer feeling in still greater difficulty at the close of the talk, could only exclaim, "Then why do you dress up your illusion in jewels and

furs?" But later a little study of what is meant by Maya gave the needed help.

Next the explanations of the *spiritual man as the only reality* were not convincing and raised many difficulties, but the teaching of the Vedanta gave true light on this, and one began to realise the *Infinite* as the Life of one's life, the Self of one's self.

And so if the truths of the Vedanta are to be brought before the people of the West, one of the first necessities is clear explanation, without embroideries, of the basic truths, given under such headings as God—The World—Man. These are three subjects which appeal to all at some time in their lives. Perhaps all teaching under these heads could conform to a very clear, short, explanatory little text book.

On such a foundation as this all else could be built, according to the needs of each one, and light would be thrown on the long-discussed question of the brotherhood of man. Then it would be realised that it is first and foremost a spiritual brotherhood, the realisation of which, as in the case of Jesus the Christ and other great teachers and prophets who have come from time to time all down the ages, will manifest itself in love, self-sacrifice, and all that goes to make up the consciousness of a man who realises his oneness with the All-Father-Mother God. Just the simply put truth that God is the *only* Life, manifesting through all men, limited only by man's material mind, would soon result in some conception of the brotherhood, as well as the greatness of man.

Strong food could be given as needed, but there are certain great truths which at first sound to mortal sense as blasphemy, although later the same people may accept them with eagerness. For instance, if any man here stood forth and said, as did the great Swami Vivekananda, "I am Existence, Knowledge and Bliss absolute; I am Life, the One Being, and nothing exists except through Me, and as Me" etc. etc., he would run the risk of being certified insane.

Even in the case of the great Swami when similar utterances reached ears not prepared for them, they were looked upon as blasphemous. Commenting on some such phrases in one of his lectures in Madras, after his return from the Chicago Parliament of Religions, a member of a great missionary family wrote: "Oh this poor dark India! If there is anything more pathetic than its darkness I think it is its light. 'Awakened India' hails these doctrines as inspired."\*

To the writer it seems that India holds the greatest and deepest of truths, capable of revolutionising not only India but the whole world. But it is the *effect* of these truths which people are out to see, and our missionaries and others come back here and address church congregations on the results of 'Idol-worship' as seen in the degradation of women, child-marriages, cruel treatment of little widows and inhuman treatment of the Shudra class. These are the chief pegs on which the abuse of India and her religion are hung.

Therefore, it is the grand basic truths to which we must revert:—that, as already stated, God is the *only* Life, manifesting through all men, limited only by man's material mind. We can then show the wonderful workings-out, of which this understanding\* is capable; and next show that this *realised* will enable men to *demonstrate* this oneness in the overcoming of inharmonious material conditions, bringing into their life health, holiness, happiness, harmony, and the supply of all their needs. For man realising his oneness with the Infinite, can be the channel of nought but good.

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\* Swami Vivekananda, however, believed that this great truth could be preached to all and made easily acceptable to them. It depends on how we present it. If we tell a man that 'he is God,' he will consider it blasphemy. But if we tell him instead, "You are infinite, you have infinite power in you, you are not a sinner, but pure, you are not miserable, but infinitely blissful, you are not ignorant, but knowledge itself; you have forgotten you real nature, remember it, and you will be Divine," we are sure many will welcome it as a beautiful idea. Yet both these presentations are identical in substance. Swamiji wanted that the glory of the Atman should be preached to all, whatever might be the form of presentation. —Ed., P. B.



The time seems to have come for a religion which can be judged by its fruits, in the power of good over evil, harmony over inharmony, health over sickness, plenty over lack ; and what can give greater power than the knowledge that the Life of our life, the Self of our self is God—Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent?

If Vedanta could be presented to the people of the West in this simple way, which need not rest upon close and prolonged study as with some of us who have gained a little understanding, the prospects of its success are great. Only this week the writer had an instance of the power of its appeal—a man, an educated man, exclaiming, "How wonderfully simple ! and can this be applied to everything in life?"

The people of the West, that is to say, the workers and the anxious ones, seem more and more weary of the formal religions which suit the well-to-do and care-free, so many of whom just salve their conscience by repeating written prayers and creeds, or following the words of others in the form of petitions. Many of us who have suffered the hard things of life realise we need the Christ, but not so-called Christianity or Churchianity. As we look around on the majority of those calling themselves Christians, they do not appeal to us, and we whose hearts are tried and sore, exclaim with the great Swami :

"I tell you it is because you are not like your Christ. Do you think if you came to our doors like Him, meek and lowly, with a message of love, living and working and suffering for others as He did, we should turn a deaf ear? Oh no ! We should receive Him and listen to Him."

If the really simple teaching of the Vedanta could be used as a basis for the expression of brotherly love in carrying out the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," we should soon begin to realise the truth of the words of One who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

No, the misery which prevails in India is not the product of pure Indian religion, as taught in the Vedanta,

any more than the poverty and misery and crime of our London is the product of Christianity ; but it is the outcome of the selfishness of men who know little beyond their own material life, and which only an understanding of the Real nature of man, as taught in the Vedanta, can alter.

Only in this way, too, does there seem likely to be a realisation of a universal religion of which the world stands in so much need, when we shall each respect the means our brother uses to bring into his own consciousness a demonstrable understanding of his oneness with the Father-Mother God.

How ignorant are the people of England of the beauties of which the pure religion of India is capable ! Perhaps when that is realised, no longer will it be said in the words of Kipling, "The East is East and the West is West and never the twain shall meet," because the spiritual thought of India will be a bond of brotherhood which neither soulless organisations, nor armies, will have power to hold in check.

## THE MAHABHARATA

I lately came across a fine eulogy on Sanskrit literature and the *Mahabharata* in an article on Art and Literature contributed by A. R. Orage, editor of *New Age*, to the *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston, U. S. A.). I am sure the excerpts reproduced below will interest the readers of P. B. The writer believes that the art and literature of the West which according to him have become uncreative and soulless, can be reinfused with life and vigour only through their contact with the ancient literature of India. The yearning for the Unattainable and the Infinite, which is the primal urge behind all true art, no longer exists in the heart of the Western artists. They are trying in vain to regain the lost life of art by infusing into it the blood of savage

cultures and inventing all kinds of possible and impossible art-ideals, e.g., imagism, cubism, Joyceism, etc.

Hitherto there have been many happy accidents in the history of art in the West. *Why not another accident?* The Greek stream, about to die, received accidentally a tributary of Egyptian art "which raised its source considerably above its original level, for the Greeks, in the absence of Egyptian tradition, and even with it, were 'children.' " And later on the art of the early Middle Ages was miraculously saved by its contact with the classical sources. Since then there have been 'movements' but no great renaissance. There were only mutual influences of the countries of Europe. "There was no new tidal movement."

Now " 'the King is dead.' " Western art and literature are uninspired, and concerned and content with the visible only. The call of the Invisible does not sound in their mansions. Shall we bury the King or try to revive him by infusing life from alien sources?—asks Mr. Orage. He says :

"But is the case hopeless, and is culture irrevocably doomed? There is a remedy and not an impossible one : its name is ancient India. Ancient India stands in the same relation to us 'children' of Europe as ancient Egypt occupied toward the 'children' of Greece. Europe to-day is ancient Greece writ large. India, moreover, is our most ancient parent ; our oldest racial ancestor ; our Adam and Eve. Truly enough, her visage is wrinkled with age, and her words are a mumble of incoherence. [*Certainly not.*—Ed., P. B.] But so must, no doubt, have appeared to the Greek child the ancient wisdom of Egypt. Pythagoras is not reported to have found it easy to persuade Greece to go to school to Egypt. On the other hand, we are not obliged to speculate darkly in the philosophy of India. The philosophies of India are without exception no more than mummies, the enshrined corpses of once living ideas, and dead very long since. [*Queer and ignorant ideas!*—Ed., P. B.] And even if they could be revived, art can no more be saved by

philosophy than by art itself. The dead cannot raise the dead. Nor need we spend any time with the Indian antiquarians. Scholarship of whatever degree is barren. No—we have, by grace, accessible to us in the remains of ancient India something infinitely more living than philosophies, and infinitely more inspiring than scholarship. We have a literature translatable and translated into our own tongue, of such dimensions and qualities that its chief work alone, the *Mahabharata*, towers above all subsequent literature as the Pyramids look over the Memphian sands. Realization of the inexhaustible significance of the *Mahabharata* would be the initiation of a modern Renaissance, as surely as the revival of ancient Egypt made possible the dawn of Greece, and the swimming of Homer into the ken of the early Middle Ages stirred the watchers of the skies to ecstatic silence on a peak in Darien.

“The *Mahabharata*, competently translated into English under the supervision of the late Max Müller, and shortly to be beautifully retranslated and published under the auspices of the English Academy of Literature, is the greatest single effort of literary creation of any culture in human history. It is difficult for any mind to conceive the mind that conceived it; and the effort to do so is almost itself a liberal education. A walk through its table of contents is more than a Sabbath-day’s journey. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are episodes in it; and the celebrated *Bhagavad-Gita* is simply the record of a single conversation on the eve of one of its many battles. Characters appear by hundreds, and episodes follow episodes with the infinite resourcefulness of Time. Nevertheless, there is no moment when the plan of the work is forgotten. At regular stages, by astronomical clock-time as it were, everything is gathered together or is reassembled for a fresh phase of the continuous history. In the interval, relationships have been established between scores of characters, each of whom, moreover, has undergone mutation by experience, yet, on reassembly, the whole innumerable caravan is marshaled and set off

again with the least confusion in the mind of the reader. Never was writer more currently aware of his readers than Vyasa, the author. Ganeca, who transcribed it to Vyasa's dictation, had stipulated that he should be released if once the meaning should cease to be plain to him,\* and he was not released until the end. And Ganeca is every reader.

"Scholarship, lay and 'occult,' has indulged its usual speculations in the meaning of this Cyclopean monument. It is variously the history of a soul in time, the history of the human race, the history of our planet and of our solar system; again, it is the story of the conquest of India by the Aryans, or of a civil war between the conquerors themselves. Let it be all of them, as their authors agree to disagree. Who cares if Helen was a myth or a fact? Homer gave us literature. In the case of the *Mahabharata*, as in the case of the Bible, the theologians have sat too long upon the stone on the tomb. It is time that it were rolled away. Taken as literature simply, as the most colossal work of literary art ever created, its example and inspiration are as multiform and vital as time itself. It contains every literary form and device known to all the literary schools, every story ever enacted or narrated, every human type and circumstance ever created or encountered.

"Unlike the reading of derivative works of art, the reading of the *Mahabharata* is a first-hand experience. One ends it different, just as one emerges different from everything real.

"But is it not precisely this that is needed for a Renaissance — something at once different, real, a new experience, and, at the same time, indubitably art? To the Greeks, Egyptian art was religion only because its

\* The orthodox version is different. Ganesha had stipulated that the moment Vyasa would halt in his dictation, he also would cease being his amanuensis. Vyasa accepted it on condition that Ganesha would not write anything without understanding it. So whenever Vyasa's verses would not flow eloquently, he would dictate an abstruse line which would involve Ganesha in long thinking and afford a respite to Vyasa.—Ed. P.B.

standards were incomparable, hopelessly incomparable, with the prevalent Greek standards. We have only to recall the tones of the early Florentine Platonists to realize that in their eyes the classical Greeks were divine. Where but in the *Mahabharata* shall our age find a similarly fresh literary source that shall be Scripture to our literature—Scripture being literature in pursuit of an impossible aim.”\*

SURESHWAR SHASTRI

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## THE HEADY WINE OF POLITICS

[*An Unpublished Writing of the late SWAMI FRAJNANANDA*]

The question is whether the Indian people in view of building up a collective life should proceed on a political basis or on a spiritual basis. The trend of public activities indicates rather a general bid for a political basis and this impulse, giving itself utterance through newspapers and political movements, clearly owes its birth to the brilliant example and the atmosphere of culture which the political nations of the West have been creating all over the world. The same impulse, finding free scope and favourable circumstances in Japan, is pushing her on to the forefront of Asiatic countries as the most successful disciple of the Political West. In fact we live in an age which seems to be consecrated to this political impulse, and east or west, north or south, there is not a single country in this world, which, more or less actuated by this impulse, does not measure its status by the political standard. It is even a universal creed tacitly accepted by every *modern* man that the only conceivable outlook on collective life which man can entertain is the political.

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\* We believe that not only in art and literature, but also in philosophy and religion, the West may derive great inspiration from India.—*Ed.*, P.B.

Notwithstanding all this, a voice of warning for India against the great political temptation rose about a decade and half ago,—the voice of an inspired messenger from On High, who closed his career of world-wide activity almost with that of the nineteenth century with its triumphant apotheosis of political nationalism. That undying voice of Swami Vivekananda lives as an inspiration for all futurity and the warning still rings clear. When it was first uttered after the Swamiji's first return from the West, the Western wine of political aspirations was just coursing through the blood of educated India, and they slid down too soon, from visions of spiritual glory for their country which the inspired eloquence of the speaker conjured up, into the sphere of political ambitions that lay closer to their choice. But in this there was no occasion for losing heart, for wine must have its action, only let it not be the drunkard's dose, but the patient's. Before this, the heart of the Indian people had been falling fast into the fatal sleep of *tamas* and a new spirit of activity was required to be infused into it at any cost. So it was a kind Providence that brought down over it the rude shock of conflicting Western ideals, and from the confusion of conflict and the tumult of self-adaptation, the keynote of a new awakening was heard in the revived sentiment for collective interests and collective life, that welled up in the bosom of educated men with the promise of a long lease of new life for India. It was of the highest moment then that that sentiment after this its new birth should live to grow and deepen, and a comparatively less value attached at that stage to the question of a proper direction. So this sentiment, cut off from all those forces that gave it direction and scope in the historic past but now lay dormant, had to depend for nourishment and support solely on a common political outlook and a common imported culture which the British rule brought with it, and naturally caught the contagion of that political impulse which runs rampant in the West. The political spirit is fraught with the excitement of conflicting rights and is therefore fraught

with that *rajas* which constitutes the most potent force for counteracting *tamas*. So the wine of political aspirations acted from the beginning like a powerful tonic upon the nerves of Indian life stupefied by *tamas*, and while giving forth his message of warning, Swami Vivekananda could well afford to wait and follow its action, till the enduring sentiment for collective life into which this wine had transfused itself would rise as a result of the process to the pitch of an active unquenchable enthusiasm.

But the aspect of things has changed since then, and the patient's dose has turned itself into the drunkard's. The political craze has seized upon the soul of educated India and a political prospect for collective life in India has enchanted their vision. Lost in a dreamland of political independence, they have been weaving up their religion and their past history into the tawdry texture of their dream, and the nimbler spirits fretting against obstructions have been running sometimes to ignoble excesses. It is a pitiless triumph of the Western political spirit, seeking to lead India astray from that noblest scheme of collective life which she has been working at throughout her past and which she has got to demonstrate to mankind in the future. And the pity of it is that half of this triumph has been won behind the treacherous cover of the term "Swadeshi"! For a political prospect for the Indian collective life is as good "Swadeshi" as some Swadeshi articles in use, manufactured from ingredients and inclosed in bottles that are all of foreign importation!

It is high time therefore that the unwary victims of the political creed in India should cry halt in this their onward march to self-oblivion and ruin, and should firmly draw the line between their political impulse and the noble sentiment for collective life that owns a deeper and nobler source in the depths of their nature. It is high time for all the sons of India that have the sacred enthusiasm for collective life kindled in them, to stop subjecting it further to the profanation of a refined political selfishness as the rest of the world blinded by their world-



liness do. For it should be to them the sublimest *homa* fire for a new sacrament of worship, such as will give to all mankind an imperishable sanctuary to turn to for spirituality real and unalloyed,—the India of the future where that ideal will perpetuate itself in and through an organisation of life and activity, more perfect and enduring than any political organisation of any country in the world. It is this supreme ideal of spirituality to which India has been bearing a pledged existence since the time she rose out of the watery depths, and she is bound to live so long as that ideal lives, like the eternal blue, standing inviolable beyond the sunshine and cloud of political vicissitudes and announcing itself and its claims over the birth and fall of kingdoms and empires.

So the situation most clearly demands that the great warning of Swami Vivekananda be reiterated and explained in terms of modern culture. But the secret of his unerring insight into the past and future of his country lay in his actual communion and perfect self-identification with that tremendous force that has come down embodied in the miracle of Sri Ramakrishna's life to replenish, as by an all-overwhelming wave, the ancient but declining life-currents of India, and thus to impel her onward to her predestined path of progress and beneficence to mankind.

## “TURYANANDA'S CONCLUSION”

BY DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

I have intimated in a previous chapter that I intended to deal at length with Swami Turyananda's work. He was one of the disciples of Rama Krishna whom I knew. And since he is not living now, I think I may speak about him without any reserve.

I have already alluded to his great power and prestige among other holy men. At his feet I learnt more about the heart of the religious teachings of India than

I can set forth in writing. It was because of his Himalayan spiritual stature that I returned to him to obtain a final measurement of the Message of Rama Krishna.

Now the Monastery in Benares, over which Turyananda presided,\* was divided into two sections, separated from each other by a high concrete wall. One of them was called Gunatita and the other Saguna.

In the former lived about a dozen monks who through meditation and concentration sought to realise the Gunatita—God without any name or form. They held no rites and rituals. Their days were spent in learning concentration and acquiring Insight. They were the most devoted of scholars as well. They studied all the Indian systems of philosophy and those of the West. Their dwelling, a two-storeyed brick building, gave one the impression of unmitigated somberness. Every wall, every door and every stick of furniture had no useless decoration. Beauty had been reduced to bare essentials in this home of Silence and Meditation. I do not know why Turyananda, who was a Yogi and holy man, never lived in the Gunatita section.

On the contrary, he dwelt in the Saguna part of the Monastery. Saguna (through name and form†) worship consists in realising God through work, prayer, rituals, observances and festivals. In fact the word Saguna covered a multitude of practices, such as feeding the hungry, succoring the needy, ministering to the sick and giving instruction to those who asked for it. Owing to the range of the activities that the Saguna worshippers undertook, they had to own an estate full of buildings of all kinds, and large gardens. In a remote corner of the latter, under some tall trees, stood the hut of Turyananda. Since I have dwelt in another place elaborately with Turyananda's conception of salvation by

\* Swami Turyananda was not the president of either of the sections.—Ed., P.B.

† Saguna=*Having*, not *through*, name and form.—Ed., P.B.

good works, I shall not go into the matter here. Let us learn from his lips the import of the message of Rama Krishna.\*

It was on a morning in June that I presented myself at the door of Turyananda's hut. After entering, I found its interior filled as usual with cool shadows. There was not much sunlight within, but the atmosphere was clear enough to afford me a distinct vision of every person and object in the room. Turyananda, clad in the ochre robe of Sanyasins, sat on a couch in the middle of the room. One glance at his face made it more than vivid to me that he was all-holy. I took the dust from his feet, then crouched on the floor before him. Now I looked at him very carefully. This time that lion-like person was pouring upon me a sweetness and tenderness

\* The last three paragraphs are misleading in their description. The two sections of the Monastery are called *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama* and *Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama*, and not *Gunatita* and *Saguna*. These appellations are the author's own creation. It is true, *Advaita* is equal to *Gunatita*; but the Monastery is not named the *Advaita*, but *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita, Ashrama*; and *Sevashrama* is in English a *Home of Service*. In the *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama*, there are at least two shrines in which daily worship is held with all rites and ceremonies. There are besides celebrations of annual worships and festivals. Its inmates are not devoted merely to meditation and concentration, but also to occasional ceremonials and charitable works. The *Sevashrama* is devoted essentially to the treatment and cure of the diseased, the workers being all monks. The institution is maintained by public help, and a statement of finances and work done is reported annually to the public. That is why the *Sevashrama* and its work and property are entirely separate from *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama* which depends for its maintenance entirely on the private charities of devotees and is an absolutely private institution. The workers of the *Sevashrama* and the inmates of the *R.K. Advaita Ashrama* belong both to the same *Sri Ramakrishna Order of monks*, and the nature of the spiritual practice of each is determined by his choice and temperament, irrespective of the nature of the *Ashrama* to which he may temporarily belong. But of course the workers of the *Sevashrama* cannot devote as much time to spiritual practices, properly so-called, on account of their heavy hospital duties as the inmates of the *R. K. Advaita Ashrama* can. But so long as they are engaged in the hospital work, they make of their service a worship of the Divine by looking upon the patients as the embodiments of God Himself. A monk however does not generally work more than six years in the *Sevashrama*, and he is allowed afterwards time enough to devote to prescribed spiritual practices.

Swami Turiyanandaji lived in the *Sevashrama* on account of want of house-room in the *R.K. Advaita Ashrama*.—Ed., P.B.

that were indescribable : his eyes, his mouth, even the slight forward inclination of his head, all showered on me the benediction of a lover and a seer. He gazed on me I know not how long, when those smiling lips opened and in a deep voice (deep as a bull-frog's, we say) he said : "You have certain questions for my ear, my son." "Yes, my Lord, it is about your Master, and about this Monastery."

"About Him, all of you know my feeling. May He bless you with illumination."

"My Lord," I began again, "if I understand Rama Krishna's stature at all, it is because I have beheld you."

"You mean, a dwarf like me conveys to you the Himalaya-humbling height of his soul?" Then Turyananda laughed out aloud. It was a very simple laugh ; not a trace of malice in it, but plenty of mischief. He laughed so that tears stood in his eyes. It took him a little time to wipe his eyes dry with an end of his robe. "Please repeat your question to me."

I said : "Please don't laugh at it. I want to know many things. But the question that I should like to ask first is about your work. Why do you live here in the Saguna section?\* Is Saguna worship really better than the Gunatita?"

Never in a hurry, Turyananda pondered a little. He put his hands together—then looked at them. Now fixing his gaze on me he began : "In the Gunatita—beyond

\* We are sure this question must have appeared strange to the Swami ; for as we have explained in a previous foot-note, the distinction the author conceives between the two Ashramas is non-existent and unknown. The dialogue that follows may possibly be misunderstood by the unwary reader. The first question put to the Swami is why he lived in the Saguna section, i.e., in the Sevashrama instead of in the R. K. Advaita Ashrama. The reply that the Swami gives is not evidently to it, but clearly to the second question, "Is Saguna worship really better than the Gunatita?" The Swami's reply is really an amplification of the verse of the Gita—"Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the Unmanifested ; for the goal of the Unmanifested is very hard for the embodied to reach" (XII, 4), and 'of Sri Ramakrishna's doctrine of Vijnana, according to which the devotee, after realising the Highest, dwells in the world in the loving service of men. / But there are passages in the conversation, which seem to indicate that the author has taken the Swami's words as a reply to his first query also.—*Ed., P.B.*

name and form—the monks practise the arts of concentration, and study Vedanta texts along with other metaphysics. They are in a hurry to find Him, so they think of Him all the time. When they cannot practise concentration they read the sacred books. Thus they keep themselves—mind and body—consecrated to one subject. The only times they interrupt their work are when they eat their solitary meal and sleep. They do not sleep much either. It is a hard life. But that is the price you pay for giving up the simpler path of name and form."

"But, my Lord, you are one of the great holy men of our time. Why don't you go to the other side? Why do you stay and work here in this world?" I asked with impatience.

He laughed again. This time it was a gentle laughter. After the zephyr of mirth had subsided, he resumed: "It is well that I accept every epithet that comes my way. For a man who is a votary of God must accept whatever is hurled at him—a cow-dung cake or a lotus-flower. As to why I do not go over to the other side, my son, your answer is in Rama Krishna. If He who became God stayed on this side, after his realization, why not the smaller fry like myself? Then they who are working in and through Saguna name and form, are as sacred as those on the other, Gunatita, side. These here are probably more sacred for they are more numerous.\* God comes to earth for them. Then there is more fun to be had here. Think of the kind of questions like yours that are asked to quicken our vanity. And after all, as our Master says, that to earn salvation for one's own self is not amusing enough—I really mean amusement, since God is the Most Absorbing Amusement. You must see the light in order to give sight to the blind, which is most amusing. The more numerous the ways of reaching Him, all the more formidable grows the consensus of opinion that He exists. If you love God, and if you

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\* We wonder if the Swami really said this. This appears so unlike him! Besides, the statement is scarcely correct.—*Ed., P.B.*

have seen Him your way, it is to your own interest to urge others to see Him through their unique methods. How else can you know that your way (of religion) has given you the ultimate God, if all the other religions do not reveal Him every time a soul plunders the secret of Immortality? Rama Krishna taught us the ancient truth of India—ATMANO MOKSHARTHA JAGAT JANA HITAYACHA (the blessings that will come to all and the salvation that will be yours).<sup>\*</sup> Where else but in this part can one pursue both? One like myself likes this Saguna worship. Each name and each form that is, exists in order to articulate God. We must help all people to utter the thunder of Silence. Let the gem of salvation be set in the heart of every man and woman. For each one of them is here to give you verification of your God by finding Him in his way."

"That explains why you who can easily cross over any time to the Gunatita, Absolute, stay here on this side of name and form?" I asked.

"I stay on this side," he said emphatically, "because it is easier of the two. It is the path of the weak and the simple. Here is room for a man of action, for a pure mystic, and for a pure lover of God.<sup>†</sup> The man of action, if he eschews all the material reward of his acts here and hereafter, will find God in no time. A mystic who meditates and prays without any desire for acquiring power, he too will find the All-Powerful in a short time. And he, who loves God's creatures, finds Him the instant his love is not caused by a motive, nor held by an earthly end.<sup>‡</sup> Here in the house of name and form there is room for all. It is the market place of the Infinite. I

<sup>\*</sup> The Sanskrit and the translation as here given are scarcely correct. They should be: *Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhitaya cha* ("for one's own emancipation and for the good of the world").—Ed., P.B.

<sup>†</sup> But as a matter of fact the pure mystic follows the path of the Gunatita and not of the Sugana—to use the author's expressions.—Ed., P.B.

<sup>‡</sup> The sentence is scarcely a correct presentation of *Bhakti Yoga* (for it is evidently *Bhakti Yoga* which is intended),—it rather describes *Karma Yoga*—the Path of Action.—Ed., P.B.

love to be here. Rama Krishna set us the example."

Turyananda's face glowed with enthusiasm. His hands lay wide open and inert on his lap. If one could overlook the movement of his lips and the fire in his eyes while he was talking, one would at once feel the perfect serenity and poise that characterised him. He embodied the phrase of the poet—"That man is fierce with tranquillity."

Now I asked him the most vital of all my questions. I spoke with a studied slowness in order to make him receive my words without laughing at them again.

"My Lord, what is the message that Rama Krishna has for the West?"

"The West must realize God more. Realization is what Rama Krishna symbolized. Religion is the record of our experience of God, and not a theory of our own belief in God. To the West his message is the same as to the East. Find God. He said to Swami Vivekananda in answer to the question: Can you see God?—'Yes, as I see you, only more intensely.' If Rama Krishna saw and became God, so can you and I. To be religious is to experience and then to believe in God. Belief comes after experience. Belief that precedes experience is not important."

"Yet there is not one belief," I interrupted him. "Only One God, but so many religions and beliefs."

The holy man fell in line with my thought with perfect ease. He rejoined: "There is only One Truth, but there are so many ways of experiencing Him. And there ought to be as many beliefs as there are experiences of God. Authentic and important beliefs are but statements of men's realization of their own inherent Godhood. Look, how experiences and statements of them differ in such objective matters as the sun—Men's experiences differ exceedingly. An African's feeling of the sun is quite different from that of a Laplander. They have different stories to tell about the cycles of the sun; the former believes that it shines twelve hours a day, while the latter holds that it shines for six months in a

year. Yet it is the same sun. Similarly with our experience of God. Though we all realize the One Beloved, our ways of stating Him are quite different. Yet all of them verify and magnify His 'thousand-facèdness.' Instead of seeing the same bleak, flat face all the time, we all see many different faces of the One Face of Silence. Does not that make the Lord all the more interesting? You cannot be bored by Him, since by the time you have grown used to seeing one aspect of Him, He has another to reveal to you. He is ever new, for He is for ever the same. As to a growing child its mother seems to display different sides of herself year after year, so does the Mother of the Universe to us. Once, when we are spiritually young, He is our Helper and Sustainer. During our soul's adolescence we find in Him our most intimate friend. In the growing manhood of our spirit, He reveals Himself as a symbol of our experience. And at the end we discover that all those faces that we have looked upon are but faces of our own Immortal Self."

"How can we find that self, my Lord?" I cried out. "So many religious teachers, so many Gurus, create but confusion!" Turyananda paused awhile. He looked at me; then through the small window at the garden without. Slowly he withdrew his gaze and fastened it upon me again. "There are Gurus who have seen the Lord. Find one of those. He will take you into the very nuptial chamber where souls of men are united with the Lord. Such a Guru may come from any caste or religion. He may be a Hindu, a Moham-medan or a Christian, but he alone has the power and the right to take on a disciple. If you have come across one such, go to that Guru, and he will give you the key to the Chamber of the Bridegroom."

Here someone interrupted us, and the rest of my questions had to remain unasked until the morrow. The next day about four in the afternoon, Turyananda discoursed to me, as he and I walked up and down on the



green turf of the Monastery gardens. He appeared quite different, as if he was another man—alert, athletic, noticing things quickly and clearly. Now and then he shouted to a passing white-robed Brahmachari and asked him about the health of certain patients in the hospital. Sometimes he stopped and chatted with the gardener working at a small bush, "about the diseases of certain trees and plants this time of the year," yet all that time—nearly two hours—he kept the thread of our conversation uninterrupted. It was during one of the pauses of his chat with the gardener that he asked me: "You have another enquiry to make. What is it, my son?"

So I put forth another question: "If each man can find God in his own way, then why not through Yoga practices?"

"Yoga practices are singular," he said. "Have you dived deep into Shivananda's pamphlet\* on that? It is a deep work, that is why it is so short. You must not be deluded by what the Yogi teachers say. For Shivananda is right. If you learn to control your breath, if you increase your powers of concentration, all those things tend to make you strong. Even physical health is affected by them. *Na tasya roga na jara na mrityu praptasya yogagnimayam shariram*—He has no age, disease, nor decay, who has put on the flame-garb of Yoga. That is true. But perpetual youth is no good to you if you cannot find Him, the Ageless, who does not have to be even young....

"Beware, my son! If you search for and find God, all the occult powers will be won unto you. And what is more astonishing than a dwarf's scaling the Himalayas is that once the Beatific Vision has been vouchsafed unto you, you will never be tempted to abuse your powers. Like those great men who, given the freedom of a city never use it, so does one with the privileges

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\* As a matter of fact, the pamphlet was not published till nearly two years after Swami Turiyanandaji's passing away.—Ed., P.B.

of the House of Immortality. The sons of Immortality never stoop to magic or display of power.

"Besides, we are living in an age when men have neither time nor patience for the thaumaturgy of occultism and Yoga. Men and women nowadays are in a great hurry. Hence they will take short-cuts to the Infinite. In Kali Yuga, this age, the only thing they have to do is to go on wanting the Lord sincerely. If they want Him long, He will reveal Himself to their mortal eyes. There is no doubt of it. He is like the mother-cat who cannot resist the crying call of her kitten very long. Look at Rama Krishna. He found the Mother by simply crying and pleading with Her. Do so yourself and She will at once take down the mask of the sun from Her Face, and reveal to you Her Face of Compassion that is within you. Oh! it is so easy to find God in our time! Look, my child, the sun is setting. It is time to commune with Her. Come into my dwelling and meditate with me. Hari Om, Hari Om."\*

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HIMALAYAN WHISPERS.—By A. Christina Albers. Published by Messrs. Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta and Simla. Pp. 16. Price Re. 1/-.

We had already the pleasure of noticing the poems that constitute the present delightful booklet in our February issue of 1925 (P. 92). The poems are extremely beautiful and we who live in the Himalayas, can attest to the genuineness of the poet's feelings and imagination. The metre and diction seem to enclose in them the very sublimity and sweet purity of the Himalayan snows. All who have not visited these holy mountains can breathe through these poems their transcendent atmosphere.

\* From the author's *The Face of Silence*, lately brought out by Messrs. E. P. Dutton and Co., New York. A review of the book will appear in our next issue.—Ed. P.B.

The booklet is nicely got-up with an oval picture of the Himalayan snow-peaks attached to the cover. The price is rather too high for such a small thing.

THE HIDDEN POWERS IN MAN.—By M. N. Ganesa Iyer.  
Published by P. K. Vinayaga Mudaliar & Co.,  
Sowcarpet, Madras. Pp. 482. Price Rs. 2/8.

Deals among others with the following subjects,—Thought and its Power, Telepathy, Hypnotism, Clairvoyance, Apparitions and Ghosts, Magic and Witchcraft and Dream Reading. Get-up indifferent.

BHAGAVAT GITHA UPANISHAD, Part I.—Translated by  
Parameswara.

A very original interpretation of the Gita! "This edition consists of 745 verses between which and extant Gita editions about 560 verses are common but here the same verses are in a different order of utterance."

SHRI SANTASANGHA PUSTAKMALA, Part III.—Published by  
Krishna Jagannath Thaly, Ramsevak Chitralaya,  
Girgaon Road, Bombay. Pp. Demy 108. Price Rs. 2/-

Contains pictures and short life-sketches of forty Sadhus and devotees written both in English and Marathi and ends with a collection of devotional songs and poems. A delightful publication, nicely got-up and cloth-bound.

## NEWS AND NOTES

### HINDUISM IN EUROPE

The Indian press, sometime ago, circulated the news of a Western lady having embraced Hinduism. The *Daily News* of London published an article on the day she sailed for India from London, giving interesting details about her and her intentions. It said:

Believed to be the only European woman subscribing to the Hindu faith, Mrs. Walter Tibbits, widow of a major

in the Northern Army of India, sails to-day for India to lay the foundation-stone of a museum at Benares, to the cost of which she has contributed £15,000. Her only companion will be a Brahmin woman of high rank, and in India Mrs. Tibbits, who is a novelist and authoress of mystical works, will also go on a sacred pilgrimage to a 15,000-feet-high cave in the Kashmir Hills. She is taking her collection of pictures, which will eventually adorn the walls of the museum at Benares, and an urn containing the ashes of her husband, Major Walter Tibbits, which will be placed in a niche in a wall. A place will be reserved for a similar urn to enclose her ashes after death.

"The Voice of the Orient Museum" will be the name of this museum, which is being erected to the memory of her husband. "I am undertaking the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone as a deputy of Marshall Foch, a very old friend of mine, who is patron of my gift," Mrs. Tibbits told a "Daily News" representative. "Madame Foch has been helping me to obtain copies of pictures in the Louvre to hang on the museum walls. This museum is to be a museum of Eastern and Western art and travel, and I chose the name from the title of the first book I published." Sir Edwin Lutyens, she added, was going to Benares at the end of December to arrange the design of the museum.

The Hindoo University, in which the museum is to be erected, occupies a site two miles by one in the midst of grassy plains on the banks of the Ganges, and Mrs. Tibbits' museum will stand in the centre of it. The laying of the foundation-stone ceremony will take place on Jan. 17 of next year. Mrs. Tibbits will stay in India a year. At Benares she will be the guest of the Maharajah of Mysore, the late Chancellor of the University. Since a year after her marriage she has been an adherent of the Hindoo religion, and it is her intention to go on a pilgrimage to the cave of Amarnath to get material for a book on veiled mysticism in India.

Interesting as the article was, the reply that was sent to it by an English lady under the caption "European

Converts to Hindu Faith" was more interesting and thought-provoking still. It indicates how much the principles of our religion are in request in the West, and how with little effort on our part, they are slowly gaining ground. We quote the reply in full :

As a follower myself of the pure teaching of the Vedanta, I was interested to read in your issue of September 14th that Mrs. Walter Tibbits is a convert to the Hindu faith.

I would like to state that the *belief* that this lady is "the only European woman subscribing to the Hindu faith" is without foundation. There are many who are doing so quietly and unostentatiously, realising that it is the wonderful Indian philosophy which gives the greatly needed understanding of man's relationship to God, based on the perfect unity of God and man, which Jesus the Christ taught.

To mention only one, who is known to all students of the *pure* Hindu faith, there is the well-known English lady, Miss Margaret Noble. She left all to become a disciple of the eloquent and learned Swami Vivekananda, who some years ago delighted and spiritually helped his hearers, both in England and America. After this lady's conversion and settling in India, she was known as Sister Nivedita. Her books are well known to students of Vedanta or Hindu philosophy,—"*The Web of Indian Life*," "*The Master as I Saw Him*," and several others.

Only last month an English lady, Miss Elizabeth Mayson, another convert to the Hindu faith, arrived in Calcutta for further study under the guidance of the great thinker, teacher and author, Swami Abhedananda, President of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society.

In the present day one has only to open papers, to which truly spiritual and highly qualified men and women contribute, to at once see that their writings are saturated with Indian thought. Many are beginning to realise the truth of what one of our own great Bishops said, that we shall never even understand the Gospel of John until we accept Indian thought.

The Vedanta, or Hindu faith in its purity is not one which appeals to women only, but a number of men both in England and America, see in it a faith which enables them to realise the power and dominion which God intended should be theirs. They also see in it the basis for a universal religion, and a true meeting ground for East and West in a manner which the presentation of films, as suggested, can never bring about. Moreover, if they are likely to be entirely one-sided, as in the case of the missionary film recently shown in London and other parts of England, when only the poorest and most needy side of India was depicted, on a level with the poorest conditions of London, they may be the means of a still wider breach.

In stating the beauties of which the pure Hindu or Vedanta teaching is capable, one does not uphold the abuses which have crept in, as alas! they have done into all religions.

#### NEW PARABLES OF JESUS

The *Message of the East*, (La Crescenta, Los Angeles, U. S. A.) publishes the following in its July issue, as discovered by Professors Hunt and Grenfell.

"Jesus saith: Except ye fast to the world ye shall in no wise find the Kingdom of God. . . . I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them and I found all men drunken and none found I athirst among them and my soul grieveth over the sons of men because they are blind in their heart.

"Jesus saith: Wherever there is one alone I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I.

"Jesus saith: Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and, having reached the kingdom, he shall rest.

"Jesus saith: Ye ask who are those that draw us to the kingdom, if the kingdom is in heaven? The fowls

of the air and all the beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea. These are they which draw you, and the kingdom of heaven is within you ; and whoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive, therefore, to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Almighty Father ; and ye shall know that ye are in the city of God and ye are the city."

### LEGACY OF BUDDHISM

Prof. J. Takakusu, professor of Sanskrit in the Imperial University of Tokyo, writing in the *Young East* (Japan), September, under the heading "Civilisation without History," raises the question why India, possessing a fine literature, has not yet a proper history, and remarks *inter alia* that although originating in the same land, Brahmanism and Buddhism are wholly apart in the course each has taken. \* \* It is Buddhism that has given history to India which was without one, Brahmanism has no written history and has in its place many legends. \* \* Buddhism has fairly authentic history and it was Buddhism that taught India how to keep personal records giving age and dates, how to conduct councils, the first lessons in voting, dramatic art, sculpture and all the magnificent temples, pagodas, libraries and universities and lastly it was Buddhism that helped in the foundation of great dynasties. In short according to him it was Buddhism that enabled India to possess a civilization in the modern sense of the word. If India never had Buddhism, she would have gone down with her immaterial civilization and she would have cut an insignificant and sorry figure. In concluding the writer says, "India in the past was saved by Buddhism. \* \* Nothing is plainer than that without salvation coming from Buddhism India will never be able to reach the goal of her aspiration. The unification of India can never be achieved simply by means of economic policies. The Indian people can never be made contented and happy

only by policies of reconciliation, for they are blind to economic interest before the dazzling light of ideals. It is only high ideals that will win over Indian people. Without laying down arms it is impossible to bring peace and good will in India. The best and only way for so doing is to give to the Indian people a religion founded on the principle of peace and non-killing. Such a religion is Buddhism. \* \* Buddhism and Buddhism alone will bring permanent peace not only to India but to the whole world."

As for the ancient form of Buddhism which Buddha preached we have the greatest respect for it as well as for his person. We Hindus worship him as an Incarnation. Real Buddhism is yet capable of doing much good. We also agree with the writer in his summing of what Buddhism has done for India. But what we cannot understand is his dealing with the case as if Buddhism was some influence coming from outside the border of India. Buddhism was a product of the Indian soil. Buddha was a Sannyasin of the Vedanta School. He started a new sect just as others are started to-day to meet the exigencies of society. The ideas now called Buddhism were ancient but Buddha gave the ideas power. The unique element in Buddhism was its social element. It was a social revolt against some of the existing evils in the society of the day. When the work for which the new movement was launched was done and the society absorbed the sap of the new movement, it subsided and disappeared from India. We would also like to point out here that our present condition on which the writer harps so much is mainly due to Buddhism. But little do we know that this degradation which is with us to-day has been left by Buddhism. Many debasing elements Buddhism in its propagandist zeal was forced to assimilate. Its extreme adaptability in the long run made it lose all its individuality and its extreme desire to be of the people made it unfit to cope with the social problems, and it ceased to live as a separate sect in the land of its birth. All the horrors that the Indians are trying to reform are the outcome of that reign



of degradation in the wake of Buddhism. The process of reclamation is going on slowly since the days of Sankara.

The writer holds out Buddhism, the religion of peace and *ahimsa*, as the only hope for Indian regeneration. India had enough of *ahimsa*. She is still under that stupor caused by the indiscriminate preaching of that doctrine to all irrespective of their capacity to assimilate it. The doctrine by itself is the highest. But the way in which it was put into practice by Buddhism brought ruin on India.

#### SOME ANNUAL REPORTS

Scarcity of space forbids us to go into a detailed examination of the annual reports of some of the branches of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission as well as of two unaffiliated centres of work, that are lying for some time on our table.

The last year's report of the *Rangoon Sevashram* shows the addition of new wards and a decrease by Rs. 5,000 of its previous year's debts. Altogether 1,262 indoor and 34,152 outdoor patients, paying 73,842 visits, were treated. Quite a great achievement, it must be admitted.

The *Brindaban Sevashram* records a better work in 1925 than in any of the previous years. Altogether 221 indoor and 7,450 outdoor patients with 26,060 repeated cases were treated. This Ashram's work is very important and strenuous, but it is regrettable that the financial support received from the public has not been adequate. Just now it wants urgently an outdoor dispensary building, a general ward for male indoor patients, workers' quarters, a guest house, an embankment and a compound wall at a probable cost of about Rs. 35,000. The public surely owes this much to this noble institution! Contributions may be sent to Secy., R. K. Mission Sevashram, Brindaban, Dt. Muttra, U. P.

The reports for the years 1924 and 1925 of the *Dacca Ramakrishna Mission* are interesting records of varied

activities, missionary, educational and charitable, in the town as well as in the outlying localities. It held weekly classes in different quarters of the town as also in the Ashram itself. And there were activities through its Free School, Library and Reading Room, through the Indoor Hospital and the Outdoor dispensary, house to house relief, cremation, and occasional famine and cholera relief. Altogether a very noble record of work the measure of which could be fully appreciated by our readers, if we could go into details.

The *Dinajpur Sri Ramakrishna Ashram*, started in 1923, is doing useful work. In 1925, it treated, in addition to 3,573 ordinary patients, 63 Kala-Azar cases with injections in its outdoor dispensary. There are also religious and educational activities to its credit. We wish it rapid growth and increasing usefulness.

The *Baranagore Anathashram* was started in 1912 for sheltering and bringing up orphans, and has at present 20 inmates. There is a Middle English School in the Ashram itself and provision for training in various arts and industries. The Ashram not only serves its inmates but is of great service to the local public through its free library, outdoor dispensary, occasional relief and aids to the widows. The utility of such an institution is immeasurable, and it behoves all men of means to come forward to its assistance. The Ashram is at present situated in a rented house. A plot of land has been secured through the generosity of a patron and there is immediate need of Rs. 30,000 for the construction of a permanent house on the new site. The recurring expenses of the Ashram are now met from monthly subscriptions and weekly rice-collection. It is necessary for the ensurance of the beneficent activities of the Ashram that there should be the nucleus of a permanent fund as also funds for the proper equipment of its school, industrial department, library and dispensary. We earnestly appeal to the generous public to send their gifts in cash or kind to the Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Anathashram, P. O. Baranagore, 24-Parganas, Bengal.

*Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home*, Bangalore City, reports that it had 16 boarders last year. It is doing quite useful work. Cannot the local public secure a house for it?

It does one good to read the all-round progress of the *Vivekananda Society*, Jamshedpur, in its last year's report. In five years, its membership has grown from 6 to 612. And no wonder. For its various activities,—weekly religious classes for both ladies and gentlemen, library and free reading room, organisation of religious discourses and lectures, and specially its three schools and one night school, Students' Home, Workers' Home, nursing of the sick, cremation of the dead and other kinds of relief,—have proved so beneficial to the public that they could not but be drawn into its sphere of influence. All credit to the noble workers!

#### “VOICE OF TRUTH”

We are much pleased to receive the first issue of *Voice of Truth*, the new English monthly started last October by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S. *Voice of Truth* has begun with a bright promise. Among other things, we have the following articles, 'The Way Out,' 'A Hero of Truth,' 'The Ideas, Ideals and Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission,' 'A Lecture by Swami Paramananda,'—all interesting and instructive. "In view of the fact that most of the newspapers and periodicals of this country (F. M. S.) are mainly devoted to the cause of its material progress, the necessity of a religious and philosophical organ for the propagation of moral or spiritual ideas and ideals is being keenly felt." We hope and pray that *Voice of Truth* will meet the necessity. The annual subscription is \$5.00 and the size of the paper Demy 8 vo., 42 pages.

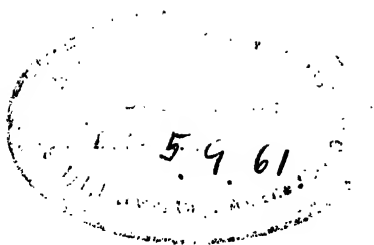
#### FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN MIDNAPORE.

We are informed that the situation in the flood-area having considerably improved, the Ramakrishna Mission has closed all its relief-centres in the Midnapore District since the 17th of November last.









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